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Cromwell and His Times

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OLIVER CROMWELL AND HIS TIMES

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CHAPTER I

A PURITAN IN THE MAKING

Oliver Cromwell's character and career might be seized as an argument for very different theses. Those who believe that man owes most to his environment could trace, stage by stage, the influence of education, friendship, and circumstance, in building up the prejudices and convictions of the future Protector. Believers in the power of heredity, on the other hand, might declare that more than a hundred years before Cromwell came into the world at all, his forebears were making his creed ready for him.

He came of a stock which was distinctly Puritan. Puritan, indeed, is a term covering the widest diversity of opinion and mental attitude, among the followers of Calvin, from the sublime to the ridiculous. Broadly, however, it has come to signify a certain austerity of life, hatred of ceremony, and, as a rule, still fiercer hatred of the pope. Now the Cromwell family had founded its fortunes on the wreck of the mediæval church. Its first great advance came when the Benedictine houses of Hinchinbrook and Ramsey were given to that Richard, who was born a Williams but died a Cromwell,

and thus identified himself with the family of his mother, who was a sister of Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, Henry VIII's vicar-general in ecclesiastical matters. Richard basked in the sunshine of his uncle's favour, was knighted by the king, and was a champion in the tournament held at Westminster to celebrate Henry's betrothal to the princess Anne of Cleves. Nor did he share the disgrace of his kinsman when Henry, caring nothing for the advantages of a Protestant alliance as compared with the vexation of a plain wife, took vengeance on the minister responsible. Thomas Cromwell died on the scaffold. Richard, if tradition may be trusted, wore mourning unrebuked, and died in his bed after six years more of prosperity. Thenceforward his family flourished. Queen Elizabeth knighted his son Henry, who built himself a fine house at Hinchinbrook, became a great man in his county, and, when the Armada came, showed in his preparations the same mixture of military shrewdness and religious enthusiasm which his grandson afterwards brought to perfection. A third knighthood was bestowed on his heir, Oliver, and on no less than four occasions James I was the guest of the latter at Hinchinbrook House.

It was this gentleman who gave his name to a small nephew, born at Huntingdon on April 25, 1599, and christened four days later at St. John's church in the same town. The child's father, Robert, if a less picturesque figure than his brother at Hinchinbrook, was a person of substance and dignity, "living neith-

er in any considerable height nor yet in obscurity." His wife, Elizabeth Steward, had already borne him four children, but not one of his sons, except the little Oliver, outlived babyhood.

The boy received the ordinary education of a country gentleman's son. First he went to the free school in his native town, under Dr. Thomas Beard, where, if he met some harshness, he had at least a sound education, and had his first lessons in Puritan zeal from a headmaster who was confident he could prove that the Pope was Antichrist. The same sort of atmosphere surrounded him when, at seventeen, he went on to Cambridge. Sidney Sussex college, which he entered in 1616, was noted for its Puritanism. His college days passed without any special circumstance. Mathematics he enjoyed, and history, but his languages were poor. He came away without a degree, probably because of the death of his father in 1617. After a short stay he left home again, not, however, to return to Cambridge, but, so a contemporary biographer tells us, to study law at Lincoln's Inn. Most young men in his position took a similar course. It served to equip them for their duties as landowners and justices, and also showed them something of the world and of men, before they settled down to a quiet country life. It was during this stay in London that Oliver met and married Elizabeth Bourchier, the daughter of a wealthy city merchant. She brought him money, made him a capable and affectionate wife, and was always devoted to him. The

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future held surprises for her of which she can have had no suspicion. If the suddenness of her promotion to almost queenly state a little turned her head, it is no matter for wonder, still less for the contempt with which some contemporaries overwhelm her.

By 1620, then, at twenty-one years of age, the future Protector was back in his native county, confronted, apparently, by no more serious task than to care for his widowed mother, provide for his wife and family, and farm his estate. So far there had been nothing particularly to distinguish him from scores of other Puritan gentlemen up and down the country leading a precisely similar existence. Those who love signs and wonders may talk of his childish visions, of strange hints dropped to his playfellows, and so forth. But these are the natural inventions of those who write after pretended prophecy has been fulfilled in fact. The only authentic picture that can be painted is first of a sturdy little schoolboy: then of an energetic undergraduate, "more famous for his exercises in the fields than in the schools": and lastly of a young landowner settling down to the tasks his position involved.

For the next twenty years, indeed, family and local affairs largely, though not exclusively, absorbed Cromwell. His means, rather straitened at first, were improved by two successive legacies. By 1638 eight children had been born to him, the first six in the old home at Huntingdon, the two youngest in the quiet "glebe house" at Ely, to which he removed on the death of his mother's brother, Sir Thomas

Steward, who made him his heir. Possibly he was not altogether sorry to leave Huntingdon, for he had had a bitter personal quarrel with the new mayor, who was the head of the town government as reorganised by a royal charter of 1630. It is only fair to say that both parties had shown readiness to forgive and forget. This was not the only occasion on which Cromwell interested himself, in a rather conservative way, on behalf of his fellow citizens of the eastern counties. Thus he opposed a scheme to drain the fens round Ely, because rights of **pasturage and fishing would be encroached upon**. Later, when the commoners of St. Ives made a complaint to the Long Parliament about certain enclosures, Cromwell took up their cause "with great passion."

Even during these years in which he "lived reserved and austere," however, Cromwell had had some contact with national affairs. He was present, as member for the borough of Huntingdon, at the **"great, warm, ruffling parliament"** of 1628-9. There, in the first session, he saw the momentary triumph of that hotheaded, generous Cornishman Sir John Eliot, when Charles accepted the Petition of Right, a declaratory act condemning most of the king's recent acts of aggression as illegal and contrary to existing statutes. Even more illuminating, however, must have been the scene at the end of the second session, when Black Rod knocked in vain at the locked doors of the House, the Speaker was held down in his chair, and three resolutions proposed by Eliot, **and forming a direct defiance to the king, were**

carried amid wild enthusiasm. The sequel to that episode was the so-called eleven years' **tyranny—a period during which the king ruled without recourse to a single parliament, and obtained the means to do so by irregular or obsolete extortions.**

It is not easy to disentangle from the **exaggerated accusations brought by one side against** the other, the real grounds of conflict between the two parties which came later to be called royalists and parliamentarian. Two things at any rate are certain. In the first place, the causes which provoked the civil war were matured, though not created, by the eleven years' tyranny. In the second place, the real line of division lay in something more spiritual, imposing, inevitable than any immediate and temporary grounds of conflict.

The earl of Clarendon, who, if anyone, might be supposed to be intimately acquainted with **the royalist standpoint by the date when he** put into final shape his history of the Great Rebellion, singled out three blunders which the king had made. The first, the "unseasonable, unskilful, and precipitate dissolution of parliaments," roused indignation to begin with. The "extraordinary ways" in which the king sought to get money during the eleven years gave a further provocation. Finally, the highhanded policy pursued in Scotland forced Charles to meet parliament and hear its accumulated criticisms, and was thus, in Clarendon's opinion, "the most immediate cause of all that hath since gone amiss."

All the above, in truth, were outward and

visible signs of an inward mental attitude on the part of the king. Already, in James I's reign, it had become apparent that the crown was making pretensions, not indeed unprecedented, but no longer practical or practicable under changed conditions. It had also become evident that such pretensions would be met by others much newer in political history, the claim of the house of Commons, not merely to control, but to direct. Blindly and gropingly **as each party felt its way towards antagonism**, it soon became clear that nothing less than sovereignty was in dispute. Neither party wished to share power with the other: each must have supremacy; and each would back its claim with lofty talk of precedent and principle. How new, how difficult, the situation was in reality, became obvious when each party, given the opportunity, failed to put its theory successfully into practice. In the eleven years of grace, before the flood of anger overwhelmed him, Charles failed to make good his effort at tyranny. When he was dead, the republican party tried one experiment after another, and finally made something like a confession of defeat by recalling the Stuarts. Not till much later, then, till the time of William III and the first Hanoverians, were the logical results of parliament's claims really worked out.

As to immediate causes for quarrel, Clarendon's group may serve.

1. DISPUTES WITH PARLIAMENT

Between 1625, the year of his accession, and 1629, the opening year of the tyranny, Charles met three parliaments, and dissolved every one

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of them in anger. The first came to grief over supplies, the next criticised foreign policy and its failure, with the duke of Buckingham as scapegoat, while the third, as mentioned above, first wrung from Charles a great concession, then waged open war with him upon financial and ecclesiastical matters. Eliot defined the reasons for parliament's action. "Those rights, those privileges that made our fathers free-man are in question. If they be not now the more carefully preserved, they will render us to posterity less free, less worthy than our fathers." Two years before, Charles had put into words the counterclaim of royal power: "Remember that parliaments are altogether in my power, for their calling, sitting, and dissolution. Therefore, as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue, or not to be."

2. FINANCIAL OPPRESSION

In the Petition of Right, parliament had reaffirmed its right to control taxation. A clause of the petition had prayed "that no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such-like charge, without common consent by act of parliament." This was probably intended to cover direct taxes only, and, given time and peace, the third parliament would almost certainly have gone on to provide for indirect taxation, especially customs duties. It was cut off, however, in mid career, and Charles was left to provide himself with a revenue.

At first, at any rate, he did not play traitor to his recent concession: yet, without asking

on his own authority for a general tax, he contrived to use means equally irritating. A sudden antiquarian interest set him precedent-hunting in feudal England. The result was that every country gentleman who had an estate worth £40 a year found himself obliged to become a knight, or pay heavily. £170,000 came in from these fines, amongst which was £10 from Oliver Cromwell. A little later, the old forest laws were revived, and the abundant legislation of the middle ages on that subject used or abused to the uttermost. Men who had known nothing of the fact that their estates long ago had been part of the royal forest now got an unpleasant reminder, in the shape of a prosecution for encroachment. Monopolies, that is, grants of the sole right to sell a particular article to an individual, had been forbidden by an act of 1624. The spirit, though not the letter, of that act was now broken, by the grant of monopolies to companies. In return for a substantial consideration, the trade not only in luxuries but in necessities, iron, soap, salt, gunpowder, and so forth, was monopolised. There was one class of customs duty which had been exciting angry feeling now for some time—tonnage and poundage. This was a duty on every tun or cask of wine and on every 20s. worth of dry goods, entering or leaving the country. Kings had long been accustomed to receive this, and it formed an indispensable part of the revenue. Parliament, however, was anxious to stress the fact that however invariable such a gift might become, it was made "from the good will of

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the subject," and must be granted by parliament. The second of Eliot's three resolutions had declared that "whoever shall counsel or advise the taking and levying of the subsidies of tonnage and poundage, not being granted by parliament . . . shall be reputed an innovator in the government, and a capital enemy to the kingdom and commonwealth." The resolution, of course, had no statutory force, and there had been no opportunity to bring in an act. Yet for the king to continue to levy the customs without consent after so clear a declaration of opinion, was an irritating and unwise step.

By far the most unpopular measure, however, was taken in 1634, when Charles demanded a direct tax, the famous ship-money. This, though a novelty at the moment, was based on the ancient right of the crown to provide a navy by local contributions. In 1634, all the counties on the coast were assessed to contribute towards the provisions and upkeep of "ships of war." Next year, the charge was extended to inland counties. Angry public opinion found fresh cause of offence in this, though logically, since the defence of the whole land was concerned, all parts should share the expense. In each succeeding year the sheriffs found it harder to get in the contributions from their counties, especially as they were hampered by a formidable list of arrears. For example, in 1636 the arrears still due from Shropshire amounted to £52, 17s. 6d.: in 1637, to £172, 16s. 2d.: in 1638, to £676, 1s. 11d. The maritime counties were no more eager than

those inland. In Dorset, for instance, the collectors complained that they had to wring forth the tax "like drops of blood." The most famous example of resistance was that of John Hampden, Cromwell's cousin, in Buckinghamshire. He refused to pay, and forced a lawsuit, but got nothing by it except a judicial decision in favour of the king and the tax.

3. THE KING AND SCOTLAND

James I, as son of Mary Stuart, had united the thrones of England and Scotland. That almost accidental connection, however, implied no deeper unity. Scotland and England were not similar, or even parallel, in development. Centuries of border warfare had made ties of kinship less present to the eye than traditional enmities. The coming of the Reformation, which might have been a bond, had caused a further severance, for the only similarity in the religious settlement of the two was the rejection of the pope. The Scottish church had welcomed Calvinism, and the Presbyterian organisation of the church. James and Charles, on the other hand, were of the Laudian way of thinking, which emphasised the conservatism of the English reformation, insisted upon ceremony and uniformity, and retained government by bishops. The gulf between the two religious attitudes was widened when the folly of Stuart policy tried to extend the English system to Scotland.

In 1618 the Five Articles of Perth had ordered uniformity of service and the observance of church festivals. Practice, however, did not keep pace with theory, and the system

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simply existed on sufferance side by side with Presbyterianism. When the eleven years of personal rule gave Charles his chance, he proceeded to more active measures. In 1637 the Scottish church was ordered to use a prayer-book similar to that in use in England. This was accepted as a sign of the king's general aim. Small and great united in opposition. **The Edinburgh mob threw stones through the windows of St. Giles' cathedral, while the dean read the new service in a deserted church, behind locked doors.** A weightier protest was embodied in the National Covenant of 1638. That document, by the transparence of its manner and the importance of its matter: by its lofty ideal, its deep seriousness, its talk of **great principles: yet with its limited sympathies,** its prejudice, its almost pathetic failure to temper defiance with tact: served to rally all shades of opposition together, and ought to have served as an effective warning to even the blindest of English kings.

It did indeed alarm Charles into negotiation. Neither side, however, was prepared to yield enough to make a permanent agreement possible. A short war followed, called, from the rock on which all compromise split, the Bishops' war, and was succeeded by a treaty from which neither side expected more than a breathing-space.

It was his third mistake, then, which brought upon Charles the penalty of the other two. To fight Scotland, he must have supplies and support such as could be got through parliament alone. Reluctantly, therefore, he sum-

moned his fourth parliament, for April, 1640.

It was on this occasion that Oliver Cromwell made his second appearance on the public stage, for he was returned as member for the borough of Cambridge. We have no record of any action on his part, but his sympathies would be wholly with those "sober and dispassionate" men who insisted upon criticising the king's recent doings, and securing redress of grievances, before helping to ease the situation. The House was full of great names and eloquent speeches. When, after only twenty-two days, the flood of reproach was dammed by dissolution, Cromwell, like the rest, went off with new resentment added to the old.

It was not long, however, before he was back at Westminster. The summer was occupied in the "lost business" of the Second Bishops' War, and voices on all sides urged the king to summon another parliament. At last he did so, and in November, 1640, the Long Parliament began its sittings. When it met, Scotland and England were indeed at peace, but Northumberland and Durham, by the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Ripon, were in Scotch hands as security for £850 a day, which was to be paid by the king to their troops till a permanent settlement could be made. It was certain that the new parliament would have much to criticise, and equally certain that the king would resent their strictures.

CHAPTER II**THE LONG PARLIAMENT**

The parliament which now met was to have thirteen years of life, and more than one resurrection. It was to pass through amazing changes, in itself as well as in external affairs, and through a bewildering succession of enthusiasms, bitternesses, triumphs, and defeats.

Oliver Cromwell was a typical unit in the total of 500 members who formed the new house of Commons. He again represented the borough of Cambridge, and the borough members were a considerable section of the house. Most of them were country gentlemen like himself, for England was still agricultural, and the trading element in the Commons comparatively small. And if he resembled his fellows in birth, position, and education, he was equally their comrade in his strongly Puritan outlook. There was one aspect of the eleven years' tyranny which has not yet been discussed, and which must claim fuller treatment at this point. Charles' religious policy in Scotland was only a reflection of what he hoped to do more effectively and in a more congenial atmosphere in England. The former bishop of London, William Laud, became archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, and used his authority vigorously to promote the so-called "Laudian" views, with which the king heartily sympathised. Laud's great desire was **that the**

reformed church of England should not lose either in dignity or in unity by the changed conditions. He would have bishop authoritative and priest respected: he would have public worship all over the kingdom conducted with uniformity and a regard for ancient ceremonial: he would lay stress upon the sacraments and the sanctity of the priesthood. In many ways he was doing the church great service and preserving lofty ideals. On the other hand, he used his power ruthlessly, inflicted ferocious sentences upon his opponents through the Court of High Commission, and in his eagerness to "bring matters to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain," neglected precautions which even his own interest might have dictated.

The strength of the feeling against the Laudian policy was astonishing. A case which occurred on the Welsh border in 1633 illustrates the fury to which a man might be wrought by what to cooler ages seems a mere difference of external ceremony. A certain Enoch ap Evan, a farmer at Clun in Shropshire, murdered his brother John, "none other cause moving him," as he said in his confession, "but only this, that John his brother received the sacred communion in the gesture of kneeling, and he received the same sitting and bowing his head." If so far away in the west as this Laudians and Puritans could have their advocates, the excitement may be imagined at closer quarters, in London, and within the house of Commons. Neither side spared words, each was convinced of the black iniquity of the other. The "arch-

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bishop and his prelatical crew," said Puritan zealots, designed to "root the godly out of the land," and make terms with the church of Rome. Laud on the other hand believed that "unity cannot long continue in the church when uniformity is shut out of the church door," and persisted in its enforcement.

Oliver Cromwell, as might be expected, regarded Laud's doings with scant approval. It was on a religious question, to denounce the "flat Popery" preached by a cleric of the Laudian party, that he had in 1628 made his first speech in parliament. During the eleven years he had earned for himself the reputation of being "a common spokesman for sectaries." There were moments, if tradition may be trusted, when he thought of leaving England altogether. The changes in religious affairs had been marked by similar alterations in his own spiritual development. "He suffered and rose with the cause, as if he had one life with it."

Later on, Cromwell's tolerance was markedly in contrast with the fury and extremes of those wilder zealots who resented his control. Moderation, however, was a lesson to be learnt by experience and suffering, as yet in the future. In 1640 he was taking his first active share in national affairs, and for the time he was a terrible, though a valuable, member of committees, and a scandal to those of his colleagues whose courtier-like qualities rated the social virtues of tact and calm higher than the compelling sincerity and zeal which lay behind Cromwell's neglect of them. He exaggerated, he lost his temper, he interrupted and browbeat

his opponents, and yet withal he impressed the most hostile of them as a great man.

Within six days of the meeting of parliament, Cromwell made a speech. Its subject was characteristic. John Lilburn, who was to become temporarily Cromwell's loudest advocate, and ultimately a very sharp thorn in his flesh, had been shut up in the Fleet prison for acrid criticism of the Queen and her ways. It was Cromwell who rose to deliver a petition from the prisoner, and who in the end secured his release. A royalist onlooker, Sir Philip Warwick, has left a well-known description of the scene.

"I came into the House one morning . . . and perceived a gentleman speaking whom I knew not, very ordinarily apparelled: for it was a plain cloth suit which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor. His linen was plain, and not very clean, and I remember a speck of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar: his hat was without a hatband: his stature was of a good size: his sword stuck close to his side: his countenance swollen and reddish: his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour." He was "very much hearkened unto," says Warwick, but it was astonishing, for the speech made mountains out of molehills, and "aggravated the imprisonment of this man . . . to that height that one would have believed the very government itself had been in great danger by it." To Cromwell, no doubt, the imprisonment or release was symbolic of wider questions, and proportionately important.

At any rate, right or wrong, he had his way. Other contemporary evidence is similar, though more or less allowance was made according as the opinions of the observer were sympathetic or hostile to Cromwell's own. The steward of his household declared that his temper was "exceeding fiery, but the flame of it kept down for the most part." "He expressed himself with some kind of passion," says another, "but with such a commanding, wise deportment till, at his pleasure, he governed and swayed the house." In the case referred to earlier, when a parliamentary committee, of which Cromwell was one, sat to consider a dispute on enclosures in the county of Huntingdon, Hyde, the future earl of Clarendon, who was in the chair, found his colleague almost unendurable. Later, when he had many other grudges besides this old one against the leader of the party which crushed his own, he described the scene with bitterness. Cromwell, he says, "reproached the chairman for being partial, and . . . discountenanced the witnesses by threatening them." When a protest was made by Lord Manchester, "Mr. Cromwell did answer and reply upon him with so much indecency and rudeness, and in language so contrary and offensive," that it was clear the parties were so radically opposed that no real argument was possible. Hyde threatened to adjourn the committee and report Cromwell's behaviour to the House.

Clarendon very likely exaggerated in this account. Cromwell, however, would have been the first himself to admit that his temper ran

away with him. The last words he ever spoke were "exceeding self debasing, annihilating and judging himself." By that time he had begun to suspect that even to the view for which he contended there might possibly be another side. For the moment, however, he believed wholeheartedly in the merits of his cause, but often regretted, after some passionate outburst, that his methods had served it so ill.

The first two years of the existence of the Long Parliament, from November, 1640, to August, 1642, form a well-marked period, in which almost every month was of importance. The House passed from one reforming measure to another, growing more daring, more triumphant, less sympathetic to the moderates, with every step. To begin with, part of the Lords and all the Commons were united in reproach of the king, who as a result had neither money nor a party. Gradually, however, the position changed, and a body of "constitutional royalists" came into existence. They believed in liberty, free discussion, the importance of parliament, as fully as any extremist, but they believed also in restraint and in kingly dignity, and their sense of respect and decency was outraged by the insolence of the tone which gradually began to characterise parliamentary measures. When the period closed, in August, 1642, with the outbreak of civil war, Charles could count on many more supporters for that exploit than had been available for the wars of 1640.

The acts of the Long Parliament in its first session fall into three classes. There are the

attacks on the king's ministers: the vindication of the liberties of parliament: and the acts dealing with ecclesiastical matters.

Charles I could never have carried through his rule in the eleven years' tyranny except by the help and ingenuity of various ministers, conspicuous among whom were Archbishop Laud and Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. Both now reaped the whirlwind where they had sown the storm. Strafford was particularly obnoxious to the Commons as a sometime friend turned enemy. The well-known story of his downfall is one that reflects little credit on anyone concerned in it, except, perhaps, the victim himself, who went far to redeem failings in his past by the composure with which he met their penalties. It took seven months to perfect the means by which the arch-enemy of liberty, as he seemed to parliament, could be destroyed. The final change from impeachment to attainder, the wretched king's hesitation, but ultimate consent to a bill which destroyed his best friend, the generous consolation of betrayer by betrayed, are matters of common knowledge. Archbishop Laud, his hands raised in blessing, watched from a window Strafford on his way to execution. Four years afterwards he was to share his fate.

A minority of 59, furiously denounced by a majority of 204, opposed the bill of attainder. Many, however, even of the minority, were in favour of the end, and critical only of the means. There were no such legal difficulties in the way of the second group of measures,

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which met with general support. The first of these was the Triennial Act of February, 1641, intended to secure that no longer period than three years should ever again pass without the meeting of a parliament, and that, once the parliament had met, it should live for at least 50 days, unless previously dissolved with its own consent. Cromwell had been a member of the committee which prepared this bill, and had moved the second reading of another which had been brought forward earlier, for the establishment of annual parliaments. In May, a pendant to the Triennial Act was passed, declaring "that this present parliament now assembled shall not be dissolved unless it be by Act of Parliament to be passed for that purpose."

In June, the Tonnage and Poundage Act forbade the imposition of any "subsidy, custom, impost or other charge whatsoever" upon exports or imports "without common consent in parliament." For the king's financial needs, however, he was granted the custom on wool and hides, and all other impositions on merchandise which had been in use since the first day of King James, and in addition, tonnage and poundage, but for two months only. In August another source of income dried up with an Act declaring ship-money illegal.

If individuals — Strafford, Laud, Finch, Windebank—were attacked, it was natural and inevitable that less personal and more deadly enemies, the "prerogative courts," should share their condemnation. Accordingly in July, by two very plainspoken acts, all abnor-

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mal courts were swept away. The Star Chamber, the Council of the North, the Council of Wales, the Court of High Commission, and the separate courts of the duchy of Lancaster and the county palatine of Chester, were abolished.

One by one, then, the king's powers had been clipped, while he looked on almost helpless. Already, however, there were signs of division among his adversaries. The religious question was to give him a party.

To many of the members of the Long Parliament political considerations were quite secondary. Ecclesiastical reform was the one essential. Cromwell himself put the matter plainly. "Of the two greatest concernments that God hath in the world, the one is that of religion and of the conservation of the professors of it: to give them all due and just liberty: and to assert the truth of God. The other thing cared for is the civic liberty and interest of the nation. Which, though it is, and I think it ought to be, subordinate to the more peculiar interest of God, yet it is the next best God hath given men in this world: and, if well cared for, it is better than any rock to fence men in their other interests."

This attitude was a common one. The demand for religious reform was general. What it should be, and how far it should go, was quite another matter.

Putting aside the minority, so small as to be practically negligible, which resisted any change, there were three ways of thinking evident in the Commons at this date. Firstly, there were those who had an affection for the

Book of Common Prayer and episcopal government, but who wished to strip the bishops of their secular and parliamentary power. Secondly, there was the Root and Branch party, who were for destroying the prayer-book and uprooting bishops altogether. Lastly, there was another minority, of those to whom all general systems were equally hateful, and who would have wished each separate community of Christians to govern itself and worship as it liked.

As early as December, 1640, Parliament had received a petition from 15,000 citizens of London, begging for the total abolition of bishops. Cromwell was a prominent advocate of this. In the following spring, a more moderate proposal was brought forward. The bishops were to lose their votes in the house of Lords, be ineligible for membership of the king's Privy Council, and for appointment as justices of the peace.

However, the house of Lords rejected this, and the root and branch party had its turn again. At the instigation of Sir Henry Vane and Cromwell, Sir Edward Deering brought forward a bill "for the utter eradication of bishops, deans, and chapters." He deprecated the "great moderation and candour" of the house, and its "soft remedy" just proposed. It "had proved so ineffectual that they were grown more obstinate and incorrigible, so that it was now necessary to lay the axe to the root of the tree."

This bill never got further than the committee stage, and is valuable chiefly as an illus-

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tration of one point of view. Party within party was revealed when parliament came to consider what should be put in the place of bishops if the Root and Branch men had their way. The tumult was still raging when the house adjourned on September 9th.

Except in ecclesiastical matters, parliament had so far been busy with weighty, constructive work, based on reason and obvious necessities. When it reassembled, however, on October 20th, it was clear that antipathies were much sharper and remedies to be more heroic.

The king had been absent in Scotland from August 10th to November 25th, and two events occurred during the summer and autumn which were far from heightening the estimation in which he was held by his subjects. In the first place there was the Incident, a plot to seize the earl of Argyll and the marquis of Hamilton, the Presbyterian leaders in Scotland, and **carry them off beyond the seas. It ended in nothing except the promotion of its intended victims to higher rank, but it roused angry suspicion against the king. The second event** was more serious—the outbreak of the Irish rebellion.

From the calmer standpoint of modern times, with better information concerning Irish history and Irish character, it is easy to see how coexistent and coequal were political and religious motives in this revolt. To a Puritan house of Commons, however, deeply distrustful of Catholicism, nervous lest the king should make Ireland his base to fight Scotland and England, without information concerning or

sympathy for the peculiar conditions involved, the revolt seemed the summary of all it dreaded most, a warning from Heaven of the evils of a country given up to Popery. "There was a deep silence in the house, and a kind of consternation" when the first news came. As time went on: as the revolt became more and more sanguinary and terrible: as it became evident how little those who directed could control forces of savage resentment which they had loosed: as rumour magnified, and stories of incredible horrors flew about England: that silence gave way to furious speeches, and to many apprehensions of similar disaster in this country. Cromwell was in the general cry, and as credulous as his fellows, and put down his £500 among the other subscriptions to the funds for the reconquest of Ireland.

All this paved the way for one of the most striking, though not one of the wisest, documents put forth by the Long Parliament—the Grand Remonstrance of November to December, 1641. The final discussion upon it began on November 22nd, and after much heated argument it was carried by 159 to 148 votes—a majority of 11, in itself a witness to the cleavage which the measure had made in the house. All day long, from 9 o'clock in the morning, they had debated, till it grew so dark that candles were brought in. As they left the house, at 2 o'clock in the morning, Cromwell whispered in Falkland's ear, "If the Remonstrance had been rejected, I would have sold all I have the next morning, and never have seen England more: and I know there

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were many other honest men of the same resolution."

In both the political and ecclesiastical sphere, the pretensions of the measure were of the loftiest kind. The king was to choose his ministers with the consent of parliament only: and he was to act with parliament against Papists, bishops, and ceremonies. The demand was accompanied by a recapitulation of recent events, in which "they left not any error or misfortune in government, or any passionate exercise of power, unmentioned and unexpressed." It was, in fact, "a bold manifesto to the public." The party for "No Compromise" was definitely taking the lead.

The outbreak of the civil war was not only a matter of time, and the intervening acts of aggression on both sides need claim only the briefest notice. The bishops withdrew from the house of Lords, in fear of violence: in return, the Commons impeached them. There was talk of an impeachment of the queen, who had been broadly hinted at in the Grand Remonstrance. In return, Charles pursued two contradictory policies. He replied to the Remonstrance with dignity and temper. He promoted leaders of the constitutional royalists, such as Falkland and Culpepper. He tried to detach some extremists, even, it is believed, the irreconcilable Pym himself. On the other hand, he answered violence with violence in his famous attack upon the Five Members in January, 1642. He chose out five of the more notable of his opponents—Pym and Hampden: Denzil Holles, who had shared in most of the

violent acts of the Long Parliament, except the attack on Strafford, who was a relation of his by marriage: Arthur Hazelrigge, who had introduced the famous bill of attainder, and another bill, born out of due time, for parliamentary control of the militia: and William Strode, "one of the fiercest men of the party, and of the party only for his fierceness," a prime mover in the Grand Remonstrance. If they had fallen into Charles' hands, he would have had at least valuable hostages: but he failed, and was left, discredited, in a worse position than before. Later he agreed to an act excluding bishops from the house of Lords, but refused with horror a bill by which officers chosen by parliament should be put in command of the militia.

At this period the days of the feudal army were over, and the day of the professional standing army not yet come. The national force was the militia, which theoretically included every able-bodied man in each county. It had become usual, however, to issue "commissions of array," that is, to order up a certain number only, the county paying their wages. They were drilled one day a month, and commanded by a king's officer. Such as they were, they were all there was. No wonder that Charles refused to give up his hold upon them. No wonder either that parliament refused to heed his refusal, declared vaguely that the ordinance "ought to be obeyed by the fundamental laws of this kingdom," and issued their bill as the Militia Ordinance.

"Before the flame of the war broke out in

the tops of the chimneys, the smoke ascended in every county." The two parties were racing each other for possession of all available resources. Soldiers excepted, there were two essentials—ports and powder. In the first quest parliament was the more successful. The southern harbours, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and the rest, fell to its lot, as did the eastern, with the exception of Newcastle-on-Tyne. In each county there was a scramble for the local powder magazine. Cromwell did his side a useful service when he seized the store in Cambridge castle. In some other parts the king got there first, and the parliamentarians found the powder gone when they arrived.

At last, on August 22, 1642, the signal for war was given.

CHAPTER III

THE CIVIL WAR

One of the statements sometimes made is that the war was one of class against class. The royalists rather fostered this belief, and Clarendon's eloquent history generally assumes that the "gentlemen of ancient family" were for the king, whereas "people of inferior degree" were friends of parliament. Such a statement the cautious historian would not dare to make. Lines of division were, on the whole, vertical rather than horizontal. Children of the same mother fought on opposite sides. This was not always as pathetic as it seems, for

some shrewd folk deliberately avoided putting too many eggs in one basket. In Nottinghamshire, for example, the earl of Kinston "divided his sons between both parties, and concealed himself." "When," said he, "I take arms with the king against the parliament, or with the parliament against the king, let a cannon-bullet divide me between them." He was forced to abandon neutrality later, declared for the king, was taken prisoner by parliament, and while he was sailing down the river to Hull, "a cannon-bullet flew from the king's army, and divided him in the middle, . . . who perished according to his own unhappy imprecation." Of course in many cases real conviction led to a family division. It was inevitable that Oliver Cromwell should be found on the parliamentary side. His uncle, however, Sir Oliver of Hinchinbrook, and his cousin Henry, were both for the king.

It is equally hard to generalise about geographical distinctions. Broadly, as in almost every difference of opinion, north and west opposed south and east. A closer scrutiny, however, at once confirms a contemporary's opinion that "every county had the civil war more or less within itself." In the royalist west, for example, certain great towns, such as Plymouth, and Bristol, and Gloucester held firm for parliament. Most manufacturing and trading towns, indeed, opposed the king, however royalist the county might be in which they were situated.

Though some attempts had been made to encourage manufactures, and towns were

growing, most Englishmen were still engaged in rural pursuits. Much of the country was still fen, moor, or woodland, the rest tilled in open fields without hedges. Improvements in agriculture, drainage schemes, and other dictations to Nature, were resented as uncanny. Means of communication were not good, and rivers were crossed more often by fords than bridges. This increased the isolation of country life. One of the reasons why the progress of the civil war was so gradual was that all over the land were scattered manor-houses, every one of which had to be defended, and reduced, separately.

From the military point of view, neither side at first was well served. It was with difficulty that trained bands could be induced to leave their own district. The Londoners, however, were an exception to the common inefficiency, and did parliament good service. Both sides pressed men, and both relied upon individuals to raise voluntary regiments wholly or partly at their own expense. The average country gentleman, however, was not as a rule a military expert, and often relied for advice on some experienced soldier of fortune who had served abroad in the Thirty Years' War. Soon a fresh difficulty arose as private and public means became exhausted, and discontented troops and officers saw the black list of arrears of pay growing longer and longer. At first, indeed, parliament felt this difficulty far less than the king. It had the customs from the ports: it had loans from London and the rich trading classes: soon it had confiscated royalist

property. The strain, however, was so long, and the extent of operations so wide, that by and by financial difficulties were exercising the souls of parliamentary leaders quite as much as royalists. After all, the rank and file did not, like Cromwell's men later, know what they were fighting for and love what they knew, and the zeal for ideas which sustained a leader was poor comfort to an ignorant man, short of food, shelter, and arms. An immense amount of quarreling, jealousy, wrangling over precedence, telling of tales, and grumbling, went on on both sides. A pitched battle might warm a man's blood awhile: but, shut up on short commons in a small garrison, his ardour was apt to cool. The letters of officers and governors to headquarters make sorry reading.

As to the troops, cavalry formed a large and important part of the army. The ordinary mounted man wore a leather coat with a steel "back and breast," and carried a sword and a pair of pistols. In battle he charged at a trot, knee to knee with his comrades. He had two duties, to charge fiercely and to recover quickly. The second lesson was harder to learn than the first, and was bought with bitter experience.

The infantry were either pikemen or musketeers—two of the latter to one of the former. The musketeer was greatly encumbered on the march, for he carried, besides his heavy musket, his bullets (each of which weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ ounces), his powder, and a coil of "match" or inflammable rope. If, on the field, defence replaced offence as the order of the day, he was almost

useless, and had to rely upon the stout 16-foot staff of ash, topped by a steel blade two feet long, with which his companion the pikeman was armed.

Artillery was not of great importance in the war. What guns there were were often in charge of foreign engineers, who had learnt their vagaries by experience abroad.

The problem of discipline was an enormous one. When Lord Bedford was besieging Sherborne castle, his troops made off as soon as the bullets began to fly, till out of 3,300 men he had only 1,200 left. "God knows how many will slip away to-night," he reported despairingly. The royalists were as bad. When they were besieging Lyme Regis they sent to inquire the fate of some of their commanders. "It is likely they found them afterwards among the dead bodies," wrote one of the besieged, "for I suppose they could not be so cowardly as to run from their quarters, as abundance of common soldiers did." Misdirected zeal did almost as much damage as cowardice like the above. Orders to stand or retreat were often disobeyed, with the worst results. All through, ill-paid as they were, the men were much too anxious to "be their own carvers," as a contemporary put it. "Five shillings gotten in the way of spoil from the enemy gives them more content than twenty shillings by way of reward in an orderly manner." Nor did they discriminate too scrupulously between friends and foes. "They ride armed up and down with swords and pistols, muskets and dragoons, to the great terror of the people. . . . They take

men's horses, break and pillage men's houses, both night and day, in an unheard-of manner. They pretend quarrels with the Roundheads, as they call them, but, for aught I see, they will spare none if they may hope to have good booty."

Advantages and disadvantages were so evenly balanced that for the first three years there was no absolutely decisive change of fortune. Charles' general object was to re-establish himself in London. In 1642, starting from Nottingham, he turned by way of Derby, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, and Birmingham, to the south and the road to London. A battle fought at Edgehill, near Banbury, did not check his progress, though parliament claimed it as a victory for itself, and voted its general, the earl of Essex, gratitude and £5,000. For some hours the royal army lay at Turnham Green, facing the London trained bands, while Rupert had scattered a troop of parliamentary horse at Brentford. But indecision or prudence made Charles decide to retire. He went into winter quarters at Oxford, and there, in the grey walled town among the waters, royalists headquarters remained for the next two years. In the north, York served a similar purpose for the royalists, under the earl of Newcastle, while Hull was the centre for the parliamentarians under Lord Fairfax.

In 1643, all seemed at first to be in the king's favour. In the south, his army under Sir Ralph Hopton and Sir Bevil Grenville, grandson of the hero of the *Revenge*, won one success after another in Cornwall and Devon.

Then they moved east, defeating Sir William Waller on the way at Lansdown and Roundway Down, to the southern counties, and even as far as Sussex, where in December Arundel castle fell into their hands. Rupert meantime had taken Bristol, the second port in England: but Plymouth remained in the enemy's hands, a menace in the rear.

Similarly in the north all efforts to dislodge the parliamentarians from Hull were unsuccessful. Therefore, although Newcastle won victories such as that of Adwalton Moor, he dared not leave the north.

In the centre, affairs were still more indecisive. Gloucester was besieged in August, for it was essential that the king should command the nearest bridge over the Severn, if reinforcements from Wales were to reach him easily. Essex, alive to the importance of this fact, hurried to its rescue. Charles raised the siege, but waylaid him on his return journey to London, at Newbury, in Berkshire, south of Oxford. All day the fight raged in the narrow lanes, and night fell upon an uncertain issue. Next morning, however, Charles was gone. He had slipped back to Oxford, and the Parliamentary army might go its way unhindered.

From the beginning of the war it had been customary for several counties to join together, for mutual defence, with a common general and pooled resources. The most famous of these societies was the association of the eastern counties, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge, Hertfordshire, later Huntingdonshire, and, soon after, Lincolnshire. Cromwell was its

leading spirit, and, thanks to his sagacity, its forces were soon differentiated from others less energetic and successful.

It grew from small beginnings. At the very outset Cromwell had raised a troop of eighty horse, and gone with them to the Edgehill campaign. There, at the battle itself, he had seen Prince Rupert and his cavalry at their work, and fallen into the same admiration that men have felt through all time when they see a charge of fine horse with a fine leader, "all going like a cataract under a rainbow . . . right into the middle of the enemy, and through: and he a spark ahead, and the enemy streaming on all sides flat away, as you see puffed smoke and flame on a bonfire." Cromwell went away determined to raise in his own district men who would have "honour, and courage, and resolution," equally remarkable. "You must get men of spirit that is likely to go as far as gentlemen will go," he said to Hampden, "or you will be beaten yet." Through 1643 he was busy with this project, and by September he had no less than ten troops, "a lovely company."

Skirmish after skirmish proved their mettle. There was plenty to do, both in their own and neighbouring regions. When forces were summoned to protect Lincolnshire in May, 1643, they alone went with alacrity and promptitude—and won a success at Grantham. If they had had enough money and adequate support from the other troops, they might have prevented the defeat of the Fairfaxes in Yorkshire at Adwalton Moor. As it was, when that

event was followed by renewed vigour in the royalist attack upon the eastern counties, Cromwell's men did gallant service.

The year 1644 opened with one marked change in conditions. Both parties had resorted to outside alliances. Charles had concluded a "cessation of arms" with the Irish rebels; parliament had entered into a **"solemn league and covenant"** with the Scots. Neither was a very satisfactory alliance, though from the military point of view the latter was successful and the former an utter failure. Public feeling was shocked by any treaty with Catholic Irishmen, of whom of late years they had heard so many horrible things, true or untrue. It was likely, however, that many Englishmen would equally resent the **terms of the league** with the Scots, when they came to understand them. For parliament had pledged itself now, not merely to defend Presbyterianism on its native soil, but to set up a like system in England and Ireland, "according to word of God and the example of the best reformed churches."

The Irish regiments proved to be a broken reed. Fairfax defeated two of them, not long after their landing at Nantwich in Cheshire, and took 800 men into his own army. The Scots, however, advanced steadily through Northumberland and Durham, **shut Newcastle up in York**, and sat down in April, with the army of the **Fairfaxes, to besiege him**. Frantic messages reached the king at Oxford, where he lay between two parliamentary armies commanded by the earl of Essex and Sir William

Waller. So close was their approach that his own safety became even more immediately his concern. With about 6,000 men he got away to the west, and, thanks to a blunder on the part of Essex, was not seriously troubled there.

Now that the Scottish army had to be provided for, the parliament had found it necessary to reorganise. In February a Committee of both kingdoms was appointed. It contained members of both houses of parliament, and Scottish commissioners also, and was to be the supreme authority for the conduct of the joint war. Cromwell was made a member. Already, in January, he had been advanced to the position of Lieutenant-General of the Eastern Association. Nominally only second in command, the yielding, inactive disposition of his superior officer, the earl of Manchester, gave him in reality the first place. A little leaven, the energy and enthusiasm of Cromwell and his own troops, soon leavened the whole lump.

This was the army which at the beginning of June joined the other two before York. At the end of that month, Prince Rupert appeared, "with a great army out of the south," and succeeded in reaching his friends in York without striking a blow. The united royalist armies then offered battle, on Marston Moor. Mrs. Hutchinson's description of the battle is as follows: "Both armies, on a great plain called Marston Moor, had a bloody encounter, and the Scots and Lord Fairfax had been wholly routed, and the battle lost, but that Cromwell, with 5,000 men which he commanded, routed Prince Rupert, restored the other

routed parliamentarians, and gained the most complete victory that had been obtained in the whole war. The victors possessed all the prince's ordnance, carriages, and baggage: whereupon the prince fled, with as many as he could save, back into the south: the earl of Newcastle, with some of his choice friends, went into Germany, and left Sir Thomas Glenham governor of York, which he soon after surrendered." Mrs. Hutchinson was no friend of Cromwell's, so that her verdict has more than a partisan value. Rupert himself regarded Cromwell as the most formidable of his enemies, and gave him the nickname which later his men got from him—"old Ironsides." There were some, however, of the parliamentarians who made light of Cromwell's services, and declared that the Scots should share or even monopolise the credit. Cromwell himself disregarded extremes on either side. "England and the church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord in this great victory," he wrote to a friend. "God made them as stubble to our swords. We charged their regiments of foot with our horse, and routed all we charged. . . . Give glory, all the glory, to God."

"Most complete victory" as Marston Moor was called, its results, except in the north, were not very startling. Charles had already won a success at Cropredy Bridge, in Oxfordshire, after which Waller's forces dispersed; and in September he won another at Lostwithiel, in Cornwall, over the other half of the parliamentary army. Essex himself escaped abroad, and most of his men returned unhurt,

though disarmed, to their homes.

Cromwell was now having to endure a hard trial. The Eastern Association army was ordered south in August, and Cromwell was eager to obey. He was baulked, however, by Manchester, who was sulkily asserting, as the less enlightened did throughout, that the Association army ought to be kept for the use of the associated counties, and not dragged off to other parts of England. "If we could all intend our own ends less, and our own ease too," wrote Cromwell bitterly, "our business would go on wheels for expedition."

Thanks to Manchester, it was not till Charles had almost reached Oxford again that the Association army, strengthened by what was left of the other two, waylaid him at Newbury. Thanks to Manchester, again, the battle was quite indecisive. A fortnight later came another chance, but it was declined "If we beat the king ninety-nine times, yet he is king still, and so will his posterity be after him," said Manchester gloomily; "but if the king beat us once we shall all be hanged, and our posterity made slaves." It was a spirit which, if persevered in, would have postponed indefinitely any conclusion of the war.

The truth was that by this time there was a real cleavage in the parliamentary party. Presbyterians and Independents were becoming, as it were, sheep yoked with bulls. To the latter the policy of the former seemed conservative, cowardly, and ineffective, yet at the same time tyrannical, since it forced upon all the Presbyterian religion. To the Presbyter-

ians, on the other hand, the Independents appeared rash, violent, and fanatical.

One point upon which the Independents were determined was such a reorganisation of the parliamentary forces as would bring the war decisively to an end. Cromwell was with them heart and soul in this project. During the last months of 1644, he had been engaged in a bitter quarrel with Manchester, in the course of which he had expressed his general views, spoken contemptuously of Scots and Presbyterians, and espoused the Independents. The Lords and the Scots united in support of Manchester: the Commons in the end declared for Cromwell. Finally, Cromwell, with some magnanimity, gave up his attack on Manchester, but besought the house to remember that, **unless some new organisation were undertaken**, mistakes such as Manchester and others had made were sure to occur again. After much discussion, in which Cromwell played a vigorous part, the new schemes took shape, and were embodied in the New Model and Self-denying Ordinances of February and April, 1645. **By the first, the number of parliamentary troops was reduced to 22,000—6,600 horse, 1,000 dragoons, 14,400 foot.** They were to be paid by means of a regular monthly assessment on each county. "Black Tom" Fairfax, whose military skill was undoubted, and who kept his political views to himself, was made general. It was to provide him with subordinates in sympathy with the progressive policy, men who were not politicians first and soldiers afterwards, that in April the Commons

forced the Lords to agree reluctantly to self-denial. By the second Self-denying Ordinance, of April, 1645, "all and every of the members of either house of parliament" were to be discharged from civil or military office within forty days.

Oliver Cromwell, like every other member, was included in this measure. The latest date for resignation was May 12th. Quite early he came in to lay down his command, but was sent off on one piece of business after another, proved more indispensable than ever, was given an extra forty days of grace, beginning May 10th, and finally, on June 10th, was appointed Lieutenant-General for as long as the army and Fairfax should need him.

He and his 600 horse, then, were with the army of 13,000 men who fought the king at Naseby, near Market Harborough, on June 14, 1645. It was by no means certain that the result would be a parliamentary victory. So far, the king had been doing well. His own irresolution, rather than military hindrance, had kept him from marching towards Scotland, where the earl of Montrose had been winning a wonderful series of victories in his cause. Fairfax, it is true, had begun a blockade of the old headquarters at Oxford: but the king's capture of Leicester at the end of May put an end to it. More, it gave Charles a base in the Midlands from which he might strike east, north, or south.

There was much, therefore, to encourage the royalist army of some 8,000 or 9,000 men who faced Fairfax and his 13,000. Good hope and

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stout hearts go far to equalise odds of numbers: and even the odds were not so great as they seemed. The king had 5,000 horse to 6,000 of Fairfax's, and though in the foot the discrepancy was greater, many on the parliamentary side were raw recruits who had been learning soldiering only for a month or two. The royalists made ready for battle with every confidence. Cromwell, riding about his business of ordering the horse, with a smile on his face, may have been alone among the parliamentarians in that "great assurance of victory," with which, so he afterwards declared, he was filled.

He was right, however. Though four out of five of Fairfax's regiments of foot were broken by the onslaught of the royalist infantry: though Major-General Skippon, in some ways even more indispensable than Fairfax himself, was seriously wounded: though Rupert swept Iretton and the horse on the parliamentary left in confusion before him, and pounded them into Naseby village: though all was done for the royalists that courage and tenacity could do: Cromwell plucked victory out of defeat. The king, watching the battle from the reserve, saw Cromwell's horse come down "like a torrent" on Sir Marmaduke Langdale and his own left. Resistance was vain. In a little, the fragments of the broken troops were eddying about the king. With the high-heartedness a Stuart could always show in desperate straits, Charles was for riding himself into the battle, and turning the fortunes of the day. "Would you go upon your death?" cried a wellwisher,

plucking at his rein. So he turned, with his guards, and withdrew to a distance, and watched his own cause lost. From that moment, could he have known it, his steps were set towards a death more terrible by far than that from which his friend had hoped to save him.

Cromwell's men, or most of them, now returned to the fray, and threw themselves upon the royalist centre. Regiment by regiment, fighting to the last, the foot were beaten. Rupert's return, and a fresh charge, proved unavailing. By evening, the royalist foot were prisoners, the royalist horse spurring for Leicester and safety.

"The king and the kingdom were lost," said Clarendon, at Naseby. Naseby, however, was by no means the last of the fighting. At the beginning of July, Fairfax defeated Goring at Langport in Somerset, then one by one captured the western strongholds, ending by capturing Bristol from Rupert in September. Meanwhile Montrose, the solitary exception to royalist disaster, was winning victory after victory in Scotland. In September, however, he sustained a decisive defeat at Philiphaugh, beside Ettrick water in south-eastern Scotland. A little later, Charles, who had moved north to join him, suffered a reverse at Rowton Heath near Chester, and had to abandon his plans. By the winter of 1645, then, royalist hopes in the field were at an end, though it was not till March, 1646, that the king's last army surrendered, and a few garrisons held out in his cause till the spring of 1647.

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next three years, 1646, 1647, 1648, Charles

If military hopes were crushed, however, the way of diplomacy still lay open, and for the obstinately clung to a belief that it would lead him, somehow, to throne and power again. It was true, of course, that party rivalry was by this time acute. The Army resented the determination of the Houses of Parliament to set up rigorous Presbyterianism. "Old priest writ large," in a foreign form from over the border, was less liked than ever. The Scots had various grounds of discontent, and wanted a fitting reward for the help they had given. Finally, whether ignored or propitiated or dreaded, the Army itself was a grim factor in the situation.

The diplomatic tangle spun by Charles during the next three years only concerns us in one respect, that it was a dispiriting spectacle from which Cromwell learnt some lessons. Three documents serve as landmarks—the Propositions of Newcastle, August, 1646: the Heads of the Proposals, June, 1647: and the Engagement, December, 1647. In the first, the parliaments of England and Scotland demanded terms which the king could hardly with honour grant. Bishops were to be abolished, the king and every subject of the three kingdoms to take an oath to observe the Solemn League and Covenant, the "arming, training and discipline" of all forces on land and sea to be in parliament's hands for twenty years, and a list of exceptions to any general pardon to be made, which would shut out all the king's most devoted friends—Rupert, Hyde, Montrose,

and others. The following year, Parliament proposed to disband the Army without paying arrears. The Army then seized the king, and offered him terms in the Heads of the Proposals. These were far more moderate—a scheme of religious toleration and reform and control of parliament. Charles rejected them, however. When in December he made terms with the Scots in the Engagement, he accepted much less congenial proposals, agreeing, for example, “to confirm the Solemn League and Covenant by act of parliament,” if he and his own household were left free to worship as they chose.

The sequel to the Engagement was the outbreak of the second civil war, in which the Scots united with the remaining fragments of the royalist party in England, while Army and Parliament laid their feuds aside for the moment to meet a common danger. There were no great campaigns. A revolt in South Wales, with Pembroke castle as the centre of resistance, kept Cromwell busy for some months. Kent, Essex, and Sussex rose. Berwick and Carlisle were surprised by the royalists. The prince of Wales got the beginnings of a fleet in eleven revolted ships. Finally, a Scottish army under the duke of Hamilton came south, without effective backing either in Scotland or England, was defeated at Preston, and again at Warrington. Two days later, Fairfax reduced Colchester, and the Essex rebels went to swell the number of prisoners now shipped off to practical slavery in Barbados.

Events now moved rapidly. The destinies of

England lay in the hands of the Army: and the Army had become convinced that it had two enemies, one Parliament, the other the king. The first was soon disposed of. When members came down as usual to the House on December 6, 1648, they found a guard of musketeers at the door, and Colonel Pride standing by with a list in his hand. One by one those on the black list were sent back, or, if they resisted, arrested. "Pride's Purge," as it was nicknamed, had drained the House of all save the minority of Independent friends of the Army.

Cromwell approved of this action, though he did not hear of it till it was done; and to a very large extent he was in favour of the next step proposed, the trial and condemnation of the king. We know very little of the discussions that went on for the rest of the month among the group of officers who were now the controlling force in England. It would seem, however, that Cromwell at first objected to the execution of the king, and would have been content with milder measures, such as deposition, could he have been sure they would be effective. In the end, however, he became convinced that this duty was "cast upon" the nation by God Himself, and from thenceforth there was no more determined advocate of extreme measures. On January 6, 1649, the Rump or remnant of the Commons passed an act setting up a high court of justice "for the hearing, trying, and judging of Charles Stuart." From the 8th to the 27th, the commissioners sat in the Painted Chamber, or

adjourned to Westminster Hall, to confront a culprit whose dignity and kingliness undid much of the bad impression his previous follies had created, and made the task of judgment the sorer for those who honestly believed it needful.

CHAPTER IV

THE RULE OF THE RUMP (1649-1653)

The execution of the king opened a period of experiment. To destruction was to succeed construction. Charles I had not been dethroned to make way for another king, but to make way for a republic. A series of acts in the first six months of 1649 tried to define affairs as they were. By one it was declared that "the people of England and of all the dominions and territories thereunto belonging, are and shall be . . . a Commonwealth and Free State," to be governed "by the supreme authority of this nation, the representatives of the people in parliament." A previous act had abolished the office of king, for "it hath been found by experience that the office of a king in this nation and Ireland, and to have the power thereof in any single person, is unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and public interest of the people." "By the abolition of the kingly office, a most happy way is made for this nation to return to its just and ancient right." In the same way, the house of Lords had been

abolished because the Commons found "by too long experience that the house of Lords is useless and dangerous to the people of England." Such Lords, however, as had "demeaned themselves with honour, courage, and fidelity to the commonwealth" could stand for election as members of the Commons, and serve their country there. A council of state had been appointed in February, which was to order the forces, reduce Ireland, and other remaining royalist strongholds, but act throughout in strict subordination to parliament.

In words, therefore, a tremendous revolution had been accomplished. England had more than once got rid of a king: she had never before replaced him by a republic. Yet the new commonwealth in reality fell far short of its pretensions in name. If it was to stand for liberty and the "just and ancient right" of the nation, two things were to be expected—first that the fragmentary and unrepresentative Rump should withdraw to make room for some wider national assembly, and secondly that the new body should apply itself to remedying both the evils which had provoked the revolution, and those which were the outcome of years of civil war. Neither of these results, however, followed. The Rump continued to sit, and, by act of the parliament of which it was the remnant, no power on earth except itself could legally dissolve it. Nor did it justify its existence by facing social and economic problems.

There was only one excuse. The infant republic was surrounded on all sides by enemies,

and there was something to be said for the mother who had borne it keeping the care of it till it grew older and stronger. There was sufficient truth in this plea to secure the Rump against interference for some time, and from 1649 to 1653 the new commonwealth submitted to its rule. When, however, the last of the external enemies was defeated in the latter year, the incongruities of the position became apparent, and the immediate result was the driving forth of the Rump and a series of experimental constitutions.

Meantime, there were foes to be met. The death of the king had put the royalist cause on a new level. While he lived, and haggled, and blundered, his party had been sinking to discredit. He died so nobly that men were proud to serve him again. The publication of *Eikon Basilike* (the royal image), really the work of Dr. John Gauden, but supposed to be Charles' own reflections in prison, gave the Cavaliers "a living book, to be read reverently in secret places, with strong passion and tears." In vain Milton used his bitterest arts of controversy to meet it in *Eikonoclastes*—the idol-breaker. In nearly every European country horror was expressed at the king's execution. The States-General of the Netherlands came to the heir "to condole with him for the murder of his father in terms of great sorrow," and to inveigh against his murderers with "asperity and detestation." No wonder, for William II of Orange, Stadtholder of Holland, was son-in-law of the dead king. Royalist exiles found shelter in Dutch towns, royalist

ships fitted in Dutch ports. France espoused the Stuart cause warmly, and though Mazarin did not give Charles II direct help, he attacked the commonwealth in other ways, by restrictions on English imports, and by encouraging French pirates to plunder English ships. The exchange of ambassadors between the two realms came to an end. As far away as Russia, English merchants were made to suffer for their country's republican politics, while in Germany, Sweden, and Denmark disapprobation was openly expressed. Spain alone remained aloof, tempted to sympathise with the regicides, from sheer hatred of France, yet too cautious to commit itself to friendship, till events should show the real strength of the new republic. Nearer home, the revival of royalist feeling provoked fresh attacks both in Ireland and Scotland.

There seemed new hope for the royalist cause in Ireland. For some years after the Cessation treaty of 1643, the king's bids for support had achieved little, chiefly because in **trying to conciliate Catholics he too readily** abandoned the interests of Protestants. His lieutenant, the duke of Ormonde, made so certain that his own creed would perish, that in 1647 he left Ireland. However, in 1648 he returned, and tried to unite the country on a fresh principle. Common loyalty to the king should be the tie, and neither religion should triumph at the expense of the other. The **execution of January, 1649, gave him fresh support**, and a new figure-head. Charles II was duly proclaimed.

In March, 1649, Cromwell was appointed to command in Ireland, and in August, as Lord-Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief, with excellent supplies and equipment, he landed at Dublin. In May, 1650, he returned. In the interval he had crushed Irish resistance, and made his name terrible for generations. The facts of the campaigns are soon told. The first notable incident was the storming of Drogheda in September, after which Cromwell deliberately ordered the massacre of the whole of the defenders. A month later Wexford was captured, with similar horrors, though less intentional. Ireland was stupefied. The work of reduction went on apace, and within the year the whole of the coast from Londonderry to Cape Clear (except Waterford) was recovered for the commonwealth. The next campaign carried the work inland. Before Cromwell left in May, 1650, he had pushed the war into the heart of Munster. Ireton and Ludlow completed the task, till in 1652 the fall of Galway ended the Irish war. "The sun never shined on a nation more completely miserable." The land was "as a clean paper." It was for Cromwell and the commonwealth to dictate what words should be written upon it.

The Irish campaigns, and especially the two massacres, have often been singled out for blame by Cromwell's enemies, or excused on motives of expediency by Cromwell's friends. It is important, however, that the historian should treat the Irish policy as part of Cromwell's general attitude to life. The fact that what he did was terrible and repugnant is no

reason for judging it apart. All through Cromwell was penetrated by the Puritan conviction, emphasised because of the vigour and force of his personality, that the hand of God was with him. This was his consistent attitude, and its merits and defects affect his whole career, not merely a part of it. Whatever is magnificent in the conception—its faith, its inspiration, its zeal: whatever is repulsive in it—its narrowness and arrogance: is equally magnificent or equally repulsive whatever results came of it. The springs of Cromwell's actions were the same, whether he was protecting slaughtered Vaudois Protestants, winning victories in the civil war, signing the royal death-warrant, or ordering the men of Drogheda to be put to the sword. About all his "mercies" he writes in the same tone. "give me leave," he writes after Drogheda had fallen, "to say how it comes to pass that this work is wrought. It was set upon some of our hearts that a great thing should be done, not by power or might, but by the spirit of God. And is it not so, clearly? That which caused your men to storm so courageously, it was the spirit of God . . . And therefore it is good that God alone should have the glory." The Irish massacres, then, may be treated as an illustration of the length to which an exaggerated conviction of a divine purpose may lead a man: but must not be judged out of connection with the rest of Cromwell's career.

A word should be said of the settlement now made of conquered Ireland. Cromwell was not much personally concerned in it, but from the

first he approved of what was done, and many of the arrangements were made after he became Protector, and therefore in theory responsible for all England's actions. Its lines were not original. Confiscation and conversion, without respect of persons, were its chief notes. By an act of 1652, the estates of all Catholic landowners who had resisted parliament were confiscated, though a smaller or large portion was left to their wives and children according to the degree of guilt of the owner. "Transplantations" on a vast scale took place. Connaught was peopled with dispossessed Irish, and in their place, to their old homes, came "godly people" from England and even New England. As to religion, Irish Catholics might so far be free as to think what they pleased, and stay away from Protestant churches if they wished. They were given, however, no chance to exercise their own religion. Cromwell was not so far beyond his age as to recognise even the possibility of this. Catholicism, he took it, would yield to Protestantism if he removed the old teachers, the priests, and supplied new ones of his own way of thinking in abundance. This great miscalculation, the rating too low both religious and national feeling, kept open the wounds which he was trying to heal in other ways. Impartial administration of justice began, and Irish trade was treated equitably. Soon the Irish were nominally represented in the English parliament. Yet to Cromwell and his fellows, sometimes in speech, certainly in thought, Ireland meant English Ireland, the imported colonists. Behind them lay, dumb

for the moment, but nursing fierce hatred, old Ireland. It was something, of course, to have conceived the idea of the representation of Ireland, and even of a narrowed Ireland, in English counsels. At the Restoration, however, the old arrangement was restored. **The dangerous side of Cromwell's policy, however, confiscation and plantation, still remained, even when a Stuart king was anxious to give his friends their own again. Cromwell had missed an opportunity. With his "clean paper," he had only succeeded in imitating the bad copies set him, and writing down a reckoning against England and himself.**

Royalist hopes in Ireland were already doomed when Cromwell sailed for England in **May, 1650. A month later, however, Charles II himself landed at Speymouth in Scotland, and it seemed as though the commonwealth was to be subjected to a much more furious and dangerous attack.**

There were—or there had been—two royalist parties in Scotland. The first, headed by the marquis of Argyll, was supported by the Scottish church, and demanded that Charles II should become king, "upon just satisfaction," if, that is to say, he would take the Covenant himself and prescribe it universally. The second **was led by the earl of Montrose, and was made up of a comparatively small number of king's men of the old type, rash, brave, impatient, and out of sympathy with Presbyterianism. All through 1649 Charles II hung miserably in indecision, certain that the two parties could not unite, uncertain to which to commit him-**

self. Finally, a curt intimation from Argyll's envoy that if he did not accept their invitation to return he would not get a second, tempted him to seize his chance. The terms, it was true, were "rude and barbarous," but his personal presence might lead to changes. He cast the die, granted at Breda all Argyll's demands, and left Holland in May. Meanwhile Montrose, "full of great thoughts and confident of success," had invaded Scotland and been routed at Carbisdale in the Highlands. The first news Charles received on landing was that "for his service" the earl had been executed. He himself had "some state, but no liberty," and his hopes sank low.

However, the fact of his presence was in itself a menace to the commonwealth, and war soon began. Fairfax resigned his office of General when he heard that it was proposed to invade "a neighbour nation," and Cromwell, in consequence, was appointed in his place. There is no foundation for the belief that he had contrived to supplant Fairfax. On the contrary, he urged him to keep office. Fairfax was inflexible, however, and on the 26th of June, 1650, Cromwell became Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of the commonwealth forces. In July he invaded Scotland, to meet David Leslie, the Scottish general, who had more numerous, but much more inefficient forces. Cromwell contrived to draw him out of an impregnable position in Edinburg, and on his lucky day, September 3rd, broke the enemy to pieces at the battle of Dunbar. "Some of their preachers were knocked on the head while they

were promising the victory." Cromwell retired to rest his tired and almost starving army in Edinburg. The Scots had few mourners. Cromwell rejoiced: England rejoiced: and even Charles II himself found that the removal of some of the stricter party, and the fright the rest had had, served his ends. On January 1, 1651, he went through the actual ceremony of coronation, "all men making show of joy, and of being united to serve his majesty." But Cromwell came crashing down upon this slowly rising edifice of power. In June and July, 1651, Scottish and English armies faced each other, till Cromwell outflanked the Scots, and there seemed a chance for an invasion of England. It was rashly seized, and the long march south began, English armies hanging on the rear and flank. They came by way of Lancashire and Shropshire, and so at last to that "good city served by the noble river of Severn," Worcester. There, on September 3, 1651, when Charles came out from lunch, expecting nothing less than a battle, he found "that both armies were engaged." Riding from the town, he met the whole body of his own horse running in utter confusion. He made good his escape, first from Worcester, finally to France. Most of his followers were less fortunate. "The dimensions of this mercy," wrote Cromwell in his dispatch to the speaker, "are above my thoughts. It is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy." It proved, at any rate, to be the last of the great battles. By August, 1652, the whole of Scotland had been subdued. An English garrison of 12,-

000 men remained there, and fortresses were built in various places. A measure of confiscation followed, though to nothing like the same extent as in Ireland. Presbyterianism remained the national religion, though the General Assembly was dissolved, the civil government shook off church control, and Independent congregations were to be free to form and worship as they pleased. The commonwealth required, as it had required in Ireland, perfect submission and recognition of its rights. The circumstances, however, made that demand less offensive than in Ireland. As in Ireland, side by side with reduction went representation in the English parliament. This was intended as a favour, but was received as an insult. "As for the embodying of Scotland with England," wrote Robert Blair, "it will be as when the poor bird is embodied in the hawk that has eaten it up."

The day of reckoning for the Rump was now very near. But it was put off a little longer by the outbreak of a war with the seven united provinces of the Netherlands.

The Stadtholder of Holland, William II, died suddenly at the end of 1650. His heir, William III, was a baby born some weeks after his death, and the republicans seized the chance to put supreme political power, hitherto embodied in the Stadtholder, and the supreme naval and military command, into the hands of the estates instead of a single person. So far, the change would seem favourable to Anglo-Dutch relations, since one republic should support another, and the kinsman of

the Stuarts was no longer ruling.

However, the power lost by the house of Orange had gone to the rich merchants: and there was every reason for commercial jealousy between the two countries. Dutch trade and colonisation had been prospering during the first half of the seventeenth century, and England's preoccupations had served Holland well. This commercial rivalry hindered the establishment of political alliance, and though the English commonwealth sent envoys to Holland soon after William II's death, no conclusion was arrived at. Instead, the Dutch in March, 1651, made a treaty with Denmark concerning the Baltic trade, injurious to England: and in the following October, the Rump resorted with the famous Navigation Act.

By this act, commonwealth vessels alone were to have the privilege of bringing goods grown or produced or manufactured in Asia, Africa, America, or the islands, into England, Ireland, or any English possessions. Goods from any part of Europe must be carried in commonwealth ships, or else in ships belonging to the country which made or grew the commodities exported. No fish or oil or whalebone was to be brought to England or English possessions, unless caught from English ships and cured by English hands: and, after those conditions had been fulfilled, must be carried only in vessels which "truly and properly appertain to the people of this commonwealth." Finally, no ship, "whereof any strangers be owners," must take goods from one commonwealth port to another.

This was a triple attack upon the Dutch. It robbed them of their trade with English colonies, their market for fish, and their lucrative "carrying trade." The sequel, after some angry negotiation, could only be war. In this, the honours were very evenly divided between the great Dutch seaman Tromp, and the English "general at sea," Blake. The latter, with little knowledge of seamanship, getting his experience as he went along, contrived to hold his own, and even to win victories, such as that of Portland in 1653.

In the same year, discontent with the Rump came to a head. Taxes were heavier, thanks to the expenses of the war: external pressure being removed, men had time to consider internal grievances: rumours of jobbery and selfishness increased men's anger. Parliament was indeed by this time discussing what it called a project of reform: but the first point in the scheme was that the members of the Rump should keep their seats in a new parliament without re-election: and the second was that they should have such control over the elections as would secure their own interests entirely. Cromwell was quivering with impatience and indignation. In a speech full of sincerity and passion, he explained later, when he had been made Protector, what his feelings were at the time. "I pressed the parliament, as a member, to period themselves—once and again, and again, nay, twenty times over. I told them—for I knew it better than any one man in the parliament could know it: because of my manner of life, which had led me every-

where up and down the nation, thereby giving me to see and know the temper and spirits of all men, and of the best of men—that the nation loathed their sitting. . . . Had not their heels been trod upon by importunities from abroad, even to threats, I believe there never would have been any thoughts of rising or of going out of that room, to the world's end. I myself was sounded, and by no mean persons tempted: and proposals were made me to that very end: that the parliament might be thus perpetuated, that the vacant places might be supplied by new elections: and so continue from generation."

To the last, however, apparently, Cromwell, frayed and fretted with anxiety, held on to the hope of a peaceful settlement. It was not till the eleventh hour, when on April 20, 1653, the Speaker was about to put the question, "That this Bill do now pass," that he made the famous scene and drove out the members. He began with self-control, bareheaded, curbing his anger. The recital of his wrongs whipped him to fury, till, at a shocked remonstrance from a member for his "strange language . . . within the walls of parliament," he clapped his hat on his head, stamped out on to the floor, called in his musketeers. "You are no parliament! I say you are no parliament. . . . In the name of God, go!" In a few moments he was alone, agitated, convulsed, yet satisfied with his work. "It is you that have forced me to this," he shouted to the retreating members. **"I have sought the Lord night and day,** that He would rather slay me than set me up-

on the doing this work."

So ended the first stage of commonwealth. There was a clear field now, for the council of state was abolished with the parliament that had made it. The new republic was for the moment without a government. What would it choose?

Cromwell might have chosen kingship. There was no man in the kingdom, for the moment, so popular or so strong. The wildest suggestions were made, such, for example, as a marriage between Charles II and Cromwell's daughter, and a restoration of the king in name with his father-in-law as ruler. Cromwell himself, however, was not anxious to imitate the selfishness of the assembly he had just dismissed. "It did behove us, to the end that we might manifest to the world the singleness of our hearts and our integrity who did these things, not to grasp at the power ourselves, or keep it in military hands, no, not for a day." The upshot was that on July 4th, a parliament of sorts reassembled at Westminster. Free popular election had been considered too dangerous an experiment. The 140 members who now met had been nominated, with the supervision of the council of officers, by the congregational churches in each county. Five members came from Scotland, six from Ireland.

CHAPTER V

AUTOCRAT MALGRÉ LUI

The Little Parliament resigned its power on December 11, 1653. Thenceforward, till his death on September 3, 1658, Cromwell ruled England. The history of the Protectorate—for within a week it was decided that his title should be Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland—is the history of an increasing tendency to autocracy. Cromwell began his Protectorate as the elected official of a republic: he ended it as something very like a king. The historical fact is plain enough, the causes that brought it about less easy to dismiss in a word. There were many at the time who put down the change to Cromwell's personal ambition, and reviled him as an apostate from republican principles. His own words in his letters and speeches seem to indicate three things. First, that he took up office in the first place unwillingly. "I called not myself to this place. I say again, I called not myself to this place! Of that God is witness." After Worcester, he longed to lay down public office. "I begged leave to be dismissed of my charge: I begged it again and again. God be judge between me and all men if I lie in this matter! That I lie not in matter of fact is known to very many: but whether I tell a lie in my heart, as laboring to represent to you

what was not upon my heart, I say the Lord be judge." Yet, in the second place, having once accepted office, it is clear that Cromwell had a high sense of the importance of the position, and was determined to exact due respect. "If the fact be so, why should we sport with it? With a business so serious! May not this character, this stamp, bear equal poise with any hereditary interest that could furnish, or hath furnished, in the common law or elsewhere, matter of dispute and trial of learning?" And again, "I thought it was understood that I was the Protector! That I was in possession of the government by a good right from God and men! And I believe if the learnedest men in this nation were called to show a precedent, equally clear, of a government so many ways approved of, they would not in all their search find it." In the third place, Cromwell undoubtedly became more reconciled to arbitrary rule, tired of experiments in constitutional government, as he went on. "If nothing should ever be done but what is according to law," he said impatiently when criticised for setting up Major-Generals and ruling by military force, "the throat of the nation may be cut while we send for some to make a law. Therefore certainly it is a pitiful beastly notion to think, though it be for ordinary government to live by law and rule, yet if a government in extraordinary circumstances go beyond the law, even for self-preservation, it is to be clamored at and blotted at."

This attitude, however, was developed gradually. When Cromwell first accepted the Pro-

tectorship, it was represented to him that to do so was to part with power, not to usurp it. For the moment, after the Little Parliament had vanished, he was "arbitrary in power," the chief man in the country by reason of the fact that he commanded the "armies in the three nations," and was "truly not very ill beloved by them, nor very ill beloved by the people." When he accepted, in the Instrument of Government of December 16, 1653, the first written constitution England had ever had, he submitted to a network of safeguards, limitations, precise directions. Those who had framed it told Cromwell, he says, "that I did not hereby receive anything which put me into a *higher* capacity than before, but that it *limited* me." Certainly the provisions of the Instrument suggest that neither Protector, Parliament, nor People were trusted. One was to check and balance another. The legislative and executive power was placed in a government consisting of three elements. There was the Protector, elected for life only, and without power to name his successor. He must at the outset take an oath "that he will not violate or infringe the matters and things contained in this writing." There was a parliament, of one house only, with its time of duration and its functions clearly prescribed for it. Some reforms were made in its composition, small boroughs being disfranchised, and members allotted according to numbers. On the other hand, the franchise in the counties was narrowed. The last element was a council of state composed of members appointed for life,

who would control the Protector while he lived, and choose a successor when he died. As to religion, "such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship or discipline publicly held forth, shall not be restrained from, but protected in the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion." "Papists and Prelatists," however, were classed with those who would abuse this liberty and disturb the peace, as exceptions to the rule of toleration.

This was the document which Cromwell heard read in Westminster Hall, and which, hand on Bible, he swore to observe. "In this manner, and with so little pains," says Clarendon, "this extraordinary man, without any other reason than that he had a mind to it . . . mounted himself into the throne of three kingdoms."

The first parliament under the new system was to meet in September, 1654. The restoration of order, however, could not be kept waiting nine months. In a series of eighty-two ordinances, Cromwell and his council disposed of at least the most pressing business, and also laid down the principles of action. One inevitable and striking aspect of this work, of course, was an effort to make the Puritan spirit felt through the length and breadth of the land. Cock-fighting, horse-racing, gambling, idle sports were to be sternly repressed. The Sabbath was to be strictly observed. Education, especially university education, was to be encouraged, though more for purposes of piety than pure learning. With immense energy, Cromwell applied himself to all such schemes.

Yet they were less complete in fact than they seem in the written page, partly because no adequate machinery existed for securing their strict observance, partly because good sense and instinct at times made a distinction between letter and spirit. Puritan England was not so grey or loveless as the ordinances would seem to suggest. Another wide field of activity was the ecclesiastical settlement. Here Cromwell showed a broadmindedness by no means acceptable to some of his colleagues. He retained the system of tithes and parishes, and was willing that benefices should be conferred on Puritans of any way of thinking, provided they were certified as fit persons by the board of Tiers he set up to examine their claims. Catholics and Anglicans were outside the circle. In practice, however, some of the latter contrived to carry on their work on a small scale, without interference, while some even kept **their livings, promising not to use the Prayer-book.** The Protector himself was by this time prepared to contemplate toleration for Catholics and for Jews, but public opinion was too bitter against both to allow him to take action in either case. The same "human-heartedness" **which led him to religious tolerance, led him** also to desire reforms in both civil and criminal law, to wish to make the former "plain and short and less chargeable to the people," and in the latter to end a system by which men "lose their lives for petty matters." He did effect some changes in the court of Chancery, but the severity of the criminal code remained for future generations to condemn.

It must be remembered that while Cromwell was Protector, his rule and even his life were threatened on every side. His friends could be easily numbered: his enemies, open or secret, were much more difficult to compute. His semi-monarchical position outraged the Levellers, or democrats: his ecclesiastical policy angered the Presbyterians. "As God has made me instrumental in cutting down tyranny in one person," cried a republican member within an hour or two of the meeting of Cromwell's first parliament, "so now I cannot endure to see the nation's liberties shackled by another, whose right to the government cannot be measured otherwise than by the length of his sword." Some opponents, such as Lilburn, courted martyrdom by loud-voiced disaffection: others, like Vane, retired from public life in protest. Meanwhile, though royalist efforts were futile, they were persistent. The tide of opposition was none the less real because it battered against a stone wall and could not overthrow it. Scotland and Ireland were only held down by force. Men found it safest to go by twos and threes when they journeyed through lonely glens. The solitary soldier disappeared mysteriously, even in nominally peaceful regions. Presbyterian preachers, smarting under military rule, prayed openly for the king in church. The air was full of whispered plots. In 1655 there was a general royalist conspiracy. It proved abortive except in Wiltshire, where Penruddock and others actually occupied Salisbury, when the city was full for the assizes. However, divided councils ruined even this. They could not so

much as agree whether to hang the judges and sheriff or not. The "little fire" burnt itself out, costing little except the lives of a few of those who had lighted it. Yet it was significant enough.

On the other hand, though opposition was so widespread, the power of the sword was with the Protector. It is true that many soldiers and officers were far from loyal: but a sharp example or two made criticism at any rate under the breath. It is true that there was royalism in the air: but the more mature and balanced minds of the king's party realised that there was little to be got from royalism in action. If with the better chances of 1650 and 1651, the only result had been the defeats of Dunbar and Worcester, there was not much to be hoped from the worse chances of the present situation. Most Englishmen did not know Charles II, had never seen him. The older generation was dying off, or was with the king in exile. The "rough and stubborn humours" which vexed even Cromwell would be more intractable with a stranger. Royalist danger, then, did not so much threaten the overthrow of the Protectorate as determine its character. It inclined Cromwell to take more kingly state to counterbalance it.

Cromwell's relations with his parliaments well illustrate both his own attitude and the opinions of others. He had only two parliaments during his time of office. The first met in September, 1654, and was dissolved in January, 1655. The second met in September, 1656, was adjourned in May, 1657, met for a

second session in January, 1658, and was dissolved in February.

The parliament of 1654 was freely elected, except that, as the Instrument provided, and as common precaution dictated, the electors were forbidden to choose men who had served on the king's side in the civil war and had never since come over to parliament. Catholics were not allowed to vote or stand for election. The Protector was full of hopes for what might be done by this assembly. "Healing and Settling," he told them, was their task. "I must profess this unto you, whatever thoughts pass upon me: that if this day, if this meeting, prove not healing, what shall we do! But . . . I trust it is in the minds of you all, and much more in the mind of God, to cause healing. It must be first in His mind, and He being pleased to put it into yours, this will be a day indeed, and such a day as generations to come will bless you for." Then the Protector reviewed what had been done since his government began. The Chancery had been reformed, and the administration of the laws put into the hands of just men. The "heady way of every man making himself a minister and a preacher" had been stopped by the appointment of the Triers. A free parliament had been summoned. "It is that which as I have desired above my life, so I shall desire to keep it above my life." A season of war had been ended by peace with Denmark, with the Dutch, with Portugal, and peace with France was under negotiation. "Yet these are but entrances and doors of hope." "It is one of the great ends of calling his par-

liament, that the ship of the commonwelath may be brought into a safe harbor."

However, the new parliament fell to anything and everything except peace and good will. The Speaker proposed that the first subject of discussion should be, "by what authority they came thither, and whether that which had convened them had a lawful power to that purpose." Cromwell went down to the house again and made a speech of passionate reproach. They were called, he said, "to save a nation": instead they were throwing the realm into confusion and making him a laughing-stock. He must therefore demand an assurance from each member that he would refuse "to alter the government as it is settled in a single person and parliament." "I am sorry, I am sorry, and I could be sorry to the death," cried Cromwell, "that there is cause for this." A large number of members refused to sign this engagement, and were kept out in consequence. The rest wrangled, debated, and did nothing. The Protector, scrupulous himself in observing the Instrument, bore with them the prescribed five months, and then dissolved them.

There then followed an experiment which has earned Cromwell more blame than any other of his actions, except, perhaps, the Irish massacres. In August, 1655, he divided the whole of England into ten districts, and set up a Major-general as ruler of each. These officers were partly concerned with military duties. They had command of the local militia, and also of a "standing militia of horse," now raised, and to be maintained by a tax of 10 per

cent upon the incomes of the royalists of the district. This meant on the one hand that the commonwealth's grip upon the royalists was tighter, but on the other that hostility was provoked again, and royalists, however law-abiding, **marked off from union with their fellow-countrymen.** Nor was this the only evil. **The functions of the major-generals were much wider than merely military.** It was to be their duty to maintain order, to secure the observance of all acts issued by the government, to inspect, report, and investigate all the morals and manners of their district. The Protectorate was now to be, as it were, locally epitomised. It and its policy was to be brought home to every man in the land. Puritan England was to be made a reality by armed force.

In doing this, of course, the Protector was in one way quite as untrue to the principles of the Instrument as the parliament he had just rebuked for disregarding them in another. He was undoubtedly ruling as a despot, and crushing opposition by a despot's usual weapons. He himself, satisfied that he was meeting a necessity, failed to understand the causes, though he plainly saw the evidence, of general indignation. When he met his next parliament, he spoke sarcastically of the mountains that had been made, in his opinion, out of molehills. "We did find out a little poor invention, which I hear has been much regretted. I say, there was a little thing invented, which was the erecting of your major-generals. . . . Truly I think if ever anything were justifiable as to necessity, and honest in every respect, this

was. And I could as soon venture my life with it as with anything I ever undertook." Justifiable or not, it was certainly effective; and Cromwell found fresh reason for pointing contrasts and drawing conclusions which excused his action, when he compared his obedient major-generals with the argumentative members of parliament he was soon to meet again.

For in September, 1656, the Protector thought it wise to call another parliament, in order to get money for his foreign policy by constitutional means. Despite the efforts of the major-generals to control the elections, a certain number of members were returned who were opposed to them and to the Protector as their creator. However, a hundred known to be disaffected were excluded and went home. The majority proved, at first, to be fairly complaisant. They voted supplies: they declared it to be high treason to plot against the Protector's government: but they would not confirm his personal authority, and they spoke sharply and openly against the major-generals.

By one of the paradoxes of history, it was out of this discontent with Cromwell's autocratic rule that was born the desire to make him king. "They are so highly incensed against the arbitrary actings of the major-generals," wrote a contemporary, "that they are greedy of any power that will be ruled and limited by law." Better a recognized king than a tyrant. The matter was debated with much violence, but in the end, on March 31st, the scheme known as the Humble Petition and

Advice was passed through parliament, and presented to the Protector for acceptance. Cromwell must surely have known what was coming, but when it came, found himself unable to give an immediate answer. "I should have a very brazen forehead if it did not beget in me a great deal of consternation of spirit. . . . The thing is of weight: the greatest weight of anything that ever was laid upon a man." After much hesitation, and much hearing of arguments on both sides, he gave his final reply on May 8, 1657: "Truly this is my answer: that (although I think the act of government doth consist of very excellent parts, in all but one thing, or the title as to me)

. . . I cannot undertake this government with the title of king." More persons would be provoked by such an assumption of dignity than would be conciliated by the exchange of a new title for one time-honoured. When on May 25th the scheme was presented again, with the title omitted, he accepted it gladly. It was under this second constitution that he ruled to his death, and his son after him.

The very title "Humble Petition" is a clue to the general tone of the document, which in its studied courtesy and formality is a contrast to the curt, straightforward Instrument of Government. The Lord Protector was to appoint his successor during his lifetime. Parliament was again to consist of two houses, the second of which, called the Other House, was to be nominated by the Protector and approved by the Commons. Its members were to sit for life. There was to be a Privy Council of not

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more than twenty-one persons. A yearly revenue of £1,300,000 was voted. "These our desires being granted by your Highness, we shall hope, through the rich mercy and goodness of God, that it will prove some remedy to those dangers, distractions, and distempers which these nations are now in, and be an effectual means to remove those jealousies and fears which remain in the minds of many men concerning the government of this commonwealth." A month later the Protector was installed afresh, this time with pomp and circumstance, velvet and ermine, sword and sceptre. "There was little wanting to a formal coronation," said Clarendon, "but a crown and an archbishop."

When parliament reassembled, however, it became clear that "dangers, distractions, and distempers" were as real as ever. The Other House, indeed, was full of friends, but many of them had been called from seats in the Commons, while on the other hand the fact that this time the members previously shut out had been admitted, had supplied some acrid critics. The extreme republicans outnumbered the moderates, words ran high, and Cromwell was provoked to a dissolution. "If this be the end of your sitting, and this be your carriage, I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I do dissolve this parliament. And yet God be judge between you and me."

The Protector did not live to meet another parliament. Within seven months he was dead. The interval was a time of strain and anxiety. The outlook was in some ways bright enough,

for in this very year successes were won abroad, and though at home conspiracies and financial problems had to be faced, they presented no insuperable difficulties. Cromwell, however, was losing heart. Even his spirits, "of which his natural constitution afforded a vast stock," began to yield before repeated disappointments. Do what he would, apparently, he was to be forced, because he had been called to his post by armed revolution, to rule as an armed despot, and to pay for the strength of that position in its weakness. He must bear without help the burden of responsibility: he must be on his guard incessantly against attempts to kill him as the embodiment of a hated government. He was now in his sixtieth year, and weakened by two dangerous illnesses.

CHAPTER VI

FOREIGN AFFAIRS (1654-1658)

One of the few sources of satisfaction Cromwell had during these last sad months of his life was the news from abroad. Foreign affairs were going as he wished.

To understand what Cromwell was aiming at in his foreign policy, and how far his aims were justifiable, it is necessary to consider briefly the general situation in Europe. The Thirty Years' War, which had begun largely, though not entirely, from religious motives, but had become more and more political and

dynastic as it ran its course, had ended in 1648 with the treaty of Westphalia, in which almost all Europe was involved. For the war had proceeded in a series of ever-widening circles. The first stone had been thrown into the pool in 1618, when Bohemia chose Frederick, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, as its king. The ripples had been spreading ever since, so that the war passed through a Bohemian, a Palatine, a Danish, a Swedish, and in the end a French, period.

One thing about all others the war had done—it had enriched and advanced France. It was not merely that the closing treaty gave her direct gains, though these were considerable. Even more striking were her indirect gains, and especially the splitting up of Germany. The advance of France at the expense of the house of Hapsburg had begun.

Though with the treaty of Westphalia most parties came to terms, France and Spain were left at war, and it was not till 1659 that hostilities between them ended in the treaty of the Pyrenees, which carried French triumph a stage further.

The situation in 1654, then, was as follows: France was being ruled by Cardinal Mazarin in the name of the young king, Louis XIV. The king of Spain was Philip IV, who had neither abilities nor opportunity to make his country great, and was absorbed in quarrels with Portugal, Catalonia, Naples, and Sicily, all confused with the struggle with France. As to Germany, though religious difficulties had been smoothed over, the independence of the princes

was confirmed, and the emperor Ferdinand III found his powers clipped and his dignity diminished. The independence of the Dutch had been formally recognised. Two northern powers had become conspicuous during the war—Denmark and Sweden. Both Protestant powers, they were by long tradition in rivalry as fierce as that of the two Catholic powers of France and Spain. In 1654 Queen Christina resigned the crown of Sweden, which passed to Charles X, ardent, brilliant, meteoric. Throughout his life he was engaged in hostilities with Denmark, under Frederick III.

Faced with this situation, Cromwell had three considerations to take into account. The **would be the principal aspect.** From the **Eu-**
first was religion, which to him at any rate ropean standpoint, however, it was the last and not the first element to be considered. Religious reasons were no longer the directing forces of European politics. That is suggested by the fact that France and Spain, united in creed, were long unable to patch up a peace. It is confirmed by the **way in which Denmark** and Sweden, successive champions of the Protestant cause during the war, flew at each other's throats as soon as they got a chance. It is confirmed, finally, by the fact that England and Holland had been fighting each other since 1652. Commercial motives, then, outweighed religious.

Now Cromwell had never liked the Dutch war, and it had been none of his work. The Rump had passed the Navigation Act: Tromp and Blake had come to blows: on the points of

detail Cromwell had agreed that England was in the right: and the fighting once begun was not easy to stop, especially while the balance of success was with the Dutch. In 1654, however, the situation had changed in two ways. In the first place, Cromwell was now in a stronger position himself, and able to enforce his views. In the second, England was getting the better in the war, and Holland therefore more willing, though not eager, to come to terms.

The upshot was that on April 5, 1654, a treaty was made. The Dutch withdrew their demand for modification in the Navigation Act, and the province of Holland, by a private agreement, undertook to keep out from authority the house of Orange, with its Stuart sympathies. Four days later, a friendly commercial treaty was made with Sweden, which undertook to give no help to Charles II. Portugal, actually at war with England, was conciliated in July, and by the terms of the treaty made England was permitted to trade with all Portuguese colonies. Finally, in September, terms were made with Denmark, by which English ships might pass through the Sound into the Baltic under the same conditions as Dutch vessels.

All these treaties brought substantial commercial advantages, and the downfall of royalist hopes. A third aim, however, the league of all the Protestant states on the score of their common religion, had not been achieved. Cromwell had hoped that the **Protestant countries** would ally "for the outspreading of the

kingdom of Christ." The whole spirit of the age was against such a coalition.

A second principle which the Protector might well have taken into account was that of the balance of power. The European scale was heavily weighted down on the one side by France: should not England cast herself into the other and trim the balance? Spain, weakened, discredited, feeble, was a less formidable ally than conquering France.

This, however, Cromwell could not see. He was haunted by memories of Spain in her great days, when she was England's enemy and the Church's sword. Richelieu and France had helped the Protestants in the Thirty Years' War. Cromwell was blind to the complicated diplomatic motives which led them to that course. He merely observed and approved it.

For a long time, however, he remained undecided, and kept both France and Spain bidding for his alliance. France was willing to abandon the Stuart cause, and to help England to conquer the port of Dunkirk, some miles northeast of England's one-time possession, Calais. Cromwell, however, insisted that in any treaty made, a clause should recognise his right to intervene on behalf of the Huguenots or French Protestants, if the rights secured them by the Edict of Nantes should be in any way threatened. This France would not contemplate.

Spain on the other hand offered to help England to get Calais back again, and was prepared to grant England subsidies if she would send troops to help the prince of Condé, who was

leading a rebellion against the French crown. Cromwell demanded that Englishmen in Spanish territory should be free to worship as they pleased, and that English traders in the West Indies should not be molested. "That is to ask for my master's two eyes," said the Spanish ambassador, and the negotiations hung fire.

In the end, in October, 1655, Cromwell threw in his lot with France. "Your great enemy," he said to the parliament of 1656, "is the Spaniard. He is a natural enemy. He is naturally so. He is naturally so throughout." He drew a perfectly artificial, but perfectly sincere, distinction between the "Popery" of France and Spain. "Make any peace with any state that is Popish and subjected to the determination of Rome and of the Pope himself—you are bound, and they are loose. . . . We have not now to do with any Popish state except France, and it is certain that they do not think themselves under such a tie to the Pope, but think themselves at liberty to perform honesties with nations in agreement with them. . . . There is no other Popish state we can speak of, save this only, but will break their promise or keep it, as they please, upon these grounds, being under the lash of the Pope, to be by him determined."

Thirdly and lastly, there was royalism to reckon with. Charles II had escaped to France after Worcester, but soon found himself in a sad plight. France was anxious to get rid of him, and as soon as she began to contemplate an alliance with the commonwealth. Spain would not have him at any rate till it was quite

certain that England was not to be her ally. Holland after the treaty was bound to exclude him. In the end he went to Cologne. In this at least, then, Cromwell succeeded. He deprived Charles of a refuge in any country where he could be dangerous.

In the autumn of 1654, two fleets set out from England. The one, commanded by Blake, was bound first for the Mediterranean, to put down piracy, and protect British trade. The other, led by Penn and Venables, sailed off on the old track so long traversed by Englishmen, to the crescent of West Indian islands which curves across the sea from Yucatan to Venezuela. Arrived at Barbados, they opened their orders, and found that they were to attack the Spanish island of Hispaniola. Partly through mismanagement, partly through the trying climate and lack of water, they failed miserably in an attack upon the island capital of San Domingo. However, in May, 1655, they wiped out the disgrace by taking the smaller island of Jamaica, "a place fruitful in itself, and abounding in many good provisions, and a perpetual sharp thorn in the side of the Spaniard." It was not held, however, without hard fighting and much suffering, and at times the early settlers despaired of the future. The life of the infant colony was threatened again and again, and Cromwell did not live to see the success of a design which had been very dear to his heart. "He never had one syllable of anything that was grateful, from the vastest expense and greatest design that was ever made by the English." Jamaica, however, re-

mained in English hands, and became the nucleus of a vigorous colonial policy.

While the West Indian fleet was suffering such changes of fortune, Blake had been as successful as ever. First he "made the name of the English navy terrible and formidable" in the southern Mediterranean: then, at Cromwell's bidding, he turned against Spain. All through 1656 he hung about the Spanish coast, partly to cut off fleets sailing to Jamaica, partly to intercept treasure on its way home from the west. In 1656 one of his captains destroyed four and captured a fifth of eight Spanish treasure-ships off Cadiz.

The greatest of Blake's victories, however, was won at Santa Cruz, the port of the island of Teneriffe, in 1657. The Spanish treasure-fleet, ten small ships and six great galleons, was anchored in the offing, covered by a strong castle and several smaller forts, all well stocked with cannon, and lay, so the Spaniards thought, in absolute security. Blake sailed in, and after four hours' fighting, the English drove the Spaniards out and took possession of the ships. Then the wind failed, and they lay helpless, raked by all the cannon on shore. However, replying with their own guns as best they might, they set fire deliberately to every Spanish ship. When it was done, the wind turned, and the whole English fleet, without loss of a single ship, sailed out to sea. "The whole action was so miraculous that all men, who knew the place, wondered that any men, with what courage soever endured, would ever have undertaken it. They could hardly persuade them-

selves to believe what they had done: whilst the Spaniards comforted themselves with the belief that they were devils, and not men, who had destroyed them."

The fleet came home in August, but Blake fell ill, and "in the very entrance of the fleet into the sound of Plymouth," died. Cromwell gave him a state funeral, delighting to honour the man who "drew the copy of naval courage, and bold and resolute achievements."

Blake's exploits were exactly of the kind to please Cromwell, for there was no part of the Protector's policy more earnestly and consistently pursued than his determination to increase England's colonies, and keep those existing in close touch with the mother country. If in his European policy he was clinging to the past rather than the future, in the colonial interest he was abreast, or even in front, of the spirit of his own age.

It was since Cromwell's birth that England had come to have colonies at all. By the time he was forty, she possessed two groups of settlements in what are now the United States of America. The more northerly set were mainly Puritan, and extended from the original home of the Pilgrim Fathers north to Maine, south to Connecticut and Newhaven. These were separated by a cluster of Dutch and Swedish settlements from the next English group, consisting of Maryland and Virginia. In the West Indies, especially the eastern islands of the Lesser Antilles, England had a footing. The capture of Jamaica, however, gave her her first substantial possession there.

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A revolution at home might have meant colonial disintegration. As it was, Barbados and Virginia both proclaimed Charles II, and had to be reduced by Commonwealth warships. Aristocracy and the Anglican church were characteristic of the southern colonies. Even Maryland, founded for the relief of Catholics, had the Church of England as its official church. None of these, therefore, were likely to sympathise either with the religious or the political views of the republicans who executed Charles I. The Rump first, Cromwell afterwards, could do little more than exert authority over, and exact recognition from, this southern group, without achieving real cordiality of feeling.

Even in the northern colonies, "brethren in the faith," there was a good deal of independence and sensitiveness. Cromwell, when he came to power, dealt tactfully with these problems, and was recognised affectionately by the New England colonies as their friend.

How various were the convictions and sympathies of the different colonies is illustrated by their attitude on the Dutch question. The Navigation Act was resented by all alike, not because it damaged the Dutch, but because it cut the English colonies short of supplies and tied them to dependence on the mother-country. When the Long Parliament demanded that the colonists should reflect the European war by attacking their Dutch neighbours in America, the great colony of Massachusetts would hear nothing of it. By February, 1654, Cromwell had so far soothed differences of opinion as to

get all the northern colonies to raise men to join a small expedition sent out from home against the Dutch. Peace, however, was concluded before preparations were complete. The fleet was then diverted to Acadia (now Nova Scotia), where it won a large amount of territory, surrendered later by Charles II.

It was only a year after this that Cromwell came to a final decision to join the French. He had been hastened to the agreement by the fact that Mazarin, at his request, used French influence with the duke of Savoy, and thus stopped the persecution of the Vaudois Protestants, in the Alpine valleys north of lake Geneva. Spain retaliated with intrigue against the Protector both abroad and in England. In consequence, the tie with France was made still closer. England was to send a fleet and 6,000 men to join the French in an attack on Flanders, which belonged to that southern section of the Low Countries which had remained Spanish when the northern provinces of the United Netherlands wrenched themselves free.

In October, 1657, the allies fell upon the port of Mardyke, and took it. The following year a pitched battle was fought on the sand dunes west of Mardyke, which led, ten days later, to the capture of the second port of Dunkirk. Both were handed over to England. At one blow, therefore, she destroyed Spanish hopes of restoring Charles II, and acquired a foothold to compensate her for the loss of Calais under Mary. A year later Spain was brought to her knees, and her war with France ended

in the treaty of the Pyrenees.

What, then, had been achieved by Cromwell's foreign policy? No foreign power had succeeded in bring Charles Stuart to the English throne. War had been carried on with vigour, victories won. The forces of the Protector had earned the respect of Europe. England had gained, in Jamaica, a colony of permanent value; and in Dunkirk, a gate to France. The latter, however, proved expensive and unsatisfactory, and Charles II, not unwisely, parted with it later. The plea that a French alliance would forward Protestant interests seemed justified by the protection of the Vaudois. So much may be said in praise, and Cromwell himself was well satisfied with his work.

On the other hand, viewed on ultimate and not immediate grounds, England had blundered in lifting France towards the pinnacle of power she hoped to occupy. There was no greater menace to Europe, during the last half of the seventeenth century, than the aggressions and achievements of the French king, Louis XIV.

Yet even in criticism, there are extenuating points to be remembered. It was not till 1657 that Cromwell took vigorous measures to help France. What mischief he did was done chiefly in one year, and must bear a small proportion of blame when contrasted with the persistent courting of France by Charles II. Blake's victories, and the crushing of Spain, were, it is true, aids to France. It is doubtful, however, if English or any other help could have done more than retard, instead of hastening, Span-

ish decay.

In any case, judgments should be charitable, for it is hard for the man in the midst of events to see the network of European politics as clearly as is possible once time has woven the pattern complete.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

It was on August 20, 1653, that Fox the visionary, had felt the "waft of death" go out against the Protector. Within a week, there was no doubting the truth of his presentiment. Death was come so near that even a plain man could see him. Alternately shivering with ague and burning with fever, Cromwell lay at Whitehall expecting the end. "His time was come, and neither prayers nor tears could prevail with God to lengthen out his life and continue him longer with us." September came in with great gales of wind, the breath of autumn, giving the sick man restless nights, and seeming to the superstitious Nature's echo of a nation's crisis. Cromwell himself was willing to live, but resigned to die, not sorry to put off a burden always heavy, and of late almost too grievous to be borne. A few nights before he died, a watcher in his chamber heard him praying, unconscious that he was overheard. "Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with Thee through grace. And I may, I will, come to Thee for Thy people.

Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service. And many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue to go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love. And go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people, too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer, even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen."

Though "a public spirit" such as this breathed in Cromwell "as in his lifetime, so to his very last," yet as the days slipped past he became more eager for the end. On the night of September 2d, he was very restless. The physician brought him a drink, and begged him to try to sleep. "It is not my design to drink or to sleep," answered Cromwell, "but my design is, to make what haste I can to be gone." By sunrise of next day, September 3d, the anniversary of his victories at Dunbar and Worcester, the Protector was speechless, and in the afternoon he died. His body was embalmed, clad in ermine and royal purple, and taken to lie in state at Somerset House. A public funeral, with lavish ceremonial, took place in November, but meantime the body had already been laid among the dust of kings in

Westminster Abbey. "He that is raised . . . eminently above the earth is not like to get quiet of his bones," and among the more petty revenges taken by Charles II, when he came to his own again, was the exhuming of the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton, to be hanged at Tyburn on the anniversary of the day on which Charles I had been executed. The heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up on Westminster Hall.

Sympathetic tradition, wounded at the idea of so striking an indignity to so great a man, would have us believe that the remains thus ill-used were not those of the Protector at all. Within two years, a story was current that at Cromwell's own bidding the tombs in the Abbey had been opened and the position of the corpses altered, so that his own bones might lie in an unknown place, undisturbed. Pepys, the diarist, told the story to a former chaplain of the Protector's, who replied that "he believed Cromwell never had so poor a low thought in him as to trouble himself about it." Another effort at dramatic justice declares that the body was carried secretly to Naseby field, and buried there on the scene of former triumphs. These and other rumours, however, may be discredited. "Where Connaught Square now stands, a yard or two beneath the street, trodden under foot and beaten by horse-hoofs, lies the dust of the great Protector."

The present is always curious about the external appearance of men who have been conspicuous in the past, and in Cromwell's case that curiosity can be satisfied. There are many

portraits of the Protector. Several are in the National Portrait Gallery. One, by Sir Peter Lely, hangs in the hall of his own old college at Cambridge. Cromwell's good sense secured that these should be faithful to facts. "Mr. Lely," he said, "I desire you would use all **your** skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all: but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything, otherwise I never will pay a farthing for it."

On that and other canvases, therefore, Cromwell stands forth as he was—a strong, not a handsome, man. All through his life it was his personality, not grace or dress, that was commented on by observers. He was of tall stature, with a great head, "so shaped as you might see it a storehouse and shop both of a vast treasury of natural parts." Thick brown hair fell to his shoulders. His features were strongly marked—grey or blue eyes, under notable eyebrows: a great nose that even his friends joked about, and his enemies talked of as his "vulture-beak": a big mouth, set in lines of determination.

As to manners, if his bearing had none of "those talents which use to reconcile the affections of the standers-by," it was always honourable and often dignified. His career led him into social complications, diplomatic etiquette, regal ceremonial, which might have presented worrying problems to a simple country gentleman: yet, as even Clarendon observes, "as he grew into place and authority his parts seemed to be renewed, as if he had concealed faculties till he had occasion to use them: and when he

was to act the part of a great man, he did it, without any indecency through the want of custom."

He had the qualities of his defects, and the hot temper which so easily overcame him was only one result of the intense enthusiasm with which he threw himself into any work he had in hand. He was quick to repent after a storm, generous in his judgment of others. "A larger . . . soul hath seldom dwelt in house of clay than his was."

In criticising him for the violence with which, at various junctures, he drove opposition out of his path, it must be remembered how constant that opposition was, how often he was misunderstood, baffled, hindered, kept waiting for what he thought imperative necessities. He was blind, indeed, at times, to points of view unlike his own. Yet, considering his naturally passionate disposition, his impatience is less wonderful than his patience. A sense of duty led him on, with set teeth, where smaller men would have had compunctions about acting. His very greatness forced him, right or wrong, to trust his own destinies.

Yet side by side with a belief in his fate went a conviction of his personal unworthiness. The "self-debasing" words which he uttered before he sank into the death-stupor were in harmony with his whole attitude through life. Similar laments in his letters bear the print of sincerity. In this, as in other characteristics of his writings and speeches, he was doing more than use the conventional vocabulary of Puritanism. The warmth of the words is too ar-

dent, the expression too rough and impetuous, the sentences too broken, to indicate a mere use of formulæ. He felt what he wrote.

There is a famous picture by Ford Madox Brown in which Cromwell is represented on horseback, riding home across his farm. All about him are the sights and sounds of country life. The canvas is crowded with detail. Pigs grunt, cattle low, fowls cackle, and a serving-maid calls to Cromwell that his meal is ready. By the roadside is a smoking heap of weeds and rubbish. But Cromwell is oblivious of all. In his hand is an open Bible. He has read the words, "Lord, how long? Wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever? And shall Thy wrath burn like fire?" and as he looks at the flames of the bonfire, it is upon divine analogies that he broods.

Although the picture is great as an artistic achievement, as a piece of symbolism it is misleading. There were times, perhaps, when Cromwell had his fits of melancholy and abstraction. Ordinarily, however, he was alive and alert to all that went on round him. His analogies from the burning, if he drew them at all, would have been pointed with vigour and passion. More probably his interest would have fastened upon the practical needs of the moment, and he would have had a cheery word for his men and maids. He was anything but a dreary or dreamy companion. He would talk to his secretary over a pipe, challenge his fellow-councillors to a bout of rhyming, course a buck to please the Swedish ambassador, play bowls at Hampton Court, or go hawking on

Hounslow Heath. Music he loved, not merely "solemn organs," but violins and singing. The Puritan visitors of the university of Oxford had deprived a certain James Quin, a student of Christ Church. He sang to the Protector in his fine bass voice, "strong and exceeding trolling," with the result that Cromwell, delighted, offered him any boon he asked. Quin chose, and got, the restoration of his student-ship.

In his early days, at any rate, Cromwell's tastes in dress were simple, even negligent. In the first sittings of the Long Parliament he had worn "a plain cloth suith which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor." When he turned out the Rump he was clad in "plain black clothes with grey worsted stockings." In his later years he submitted to more personal state and dignity, and allowed himself to be served and clothed with some ceremony. His own clothes were finer, and his forty gentlemen attendants in their grey coats trimmed with velvet and lace, were clad more richly than their master had been for many a day. There were grumblers among the republicans to whom these changes seemed ominous. Cromwell took them simply, as irksome, but desirable for "the honour of the English nation."

Nothing is more striking than Cromwell's attachment to his own immediate circle. His mother lived to be ninety-four, and moved with him through the various stages of his fortunes untouched by their glamour, and only concerned about the greatness of his position because it exposed him to danger. She "would

be often afraid when she heard a musket that her son was shot, being exceedingly dissatisfied unless she might see him once a day at least." Mrs. Cromwell and some of her daughters seem to have borne advance less stoically. "His wife and children," said Mrs. Hutchinson, "were setting up for principality, which suited no better with any of them than scarlet on an ape." Gossiping tongues were particularly busy with the fame of Cromwell's second, and dearest, daughter, Mrs. Claypole. For instance, there is a story told of a wedding in 1656, at which none of the wives of the major-generals put in an appearance. "Where are they?" asked someone. "I'll warrant you, washing their dishes at home as they used to do," retorted Mrs. Claypole. However, there are other tales of her civility and appeals for captive royalists. At any rate, she was like the rest of her family in a fervent and unwavering attachment to its head.

As to Cromwell's general career and policy, it was inevitable that the suddenness of his rise and the determination of his actions should provoke a storm of criticism. To fellow-republicans, or some of them, he seemed a deserter: to royalists, a wickedly successful enemy. Yet both sets of critics reluctantly admitted a certain greatness in him. "In a word," wrote Clarendon, "as he had all the wickedness against which damnation is denounced, and for which hell-fire is prepared, so he had some virtues which have caused the memory of some men in all ages to be celebrated: and he will be looked on by posterity as a brave, bad man."

The restoration of the Stuarts kept up and accentuated the reproaches. Even when, with the eighteenth century, there grew up an attitude to monarchy which in some of its features recalled Cromwellian ideas, the old verdict was still unthinkingly accepted, and Pope could hold up as an example, "Cromwell, damned to everlasting fame."

It was not till Carlyle published the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, with a running commentary in his most characteristic style, that men began to see that this so-called "hypocrite and fanatic" was patently, whatever else he was, "not a man of falsehoods, but a man of truths."

The penalty of those who—

'by industrious valour climb
To ruin the great work of time,
And cast the kingdoms old
Into another mould,'

is that their reputation will be tattered and worn by scrutiny. Cromwell, like Cæsar and Napoleon, must bear the assaults of those who see in him the typical tyrant, and the dangerous admiration of those who twist his facts to suit their theories. He will fare best if he is remembered neither as an eager schemer nor an inspired prophet, but as "a plain, blunt man, that loves his friends," solving problem after problem in a difficult career when they arose, as seemed honestly to him to be best.

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